

FESTIVAL OF THE SABBATH

EDITED BY Roy Branson

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Association of Adventist Forums
Takoma Park, Maryland

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The cover of this book is the culmination piece of a mosaic mural at Walla Walla College by MacKintosh, that depicts the seven days of creation. The intense colors of "The Seventh Day" suggest joy and celebration, while its vertical thrust links God's presence with earth.

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Acknowledgments

The appearance of any volume provides the occasion for celebrating the efforts of many people.

The first person I wish to thank will be remembered, I am confident, by the historians of the contemporary Adventist Church. Although most of his years of service to the denomination still lie ahead of him, Charles Scriven, a member of the theology faculty at Walla Walla College, has already produced a body of writing that inspires Adventists to believe that the Adventist Church can be both distinctive and relevant. In addition, he deserves his reputation as one of the denomination's finest editors. In the Sixties, he was the driving force in transforming the venerable *Youth's Instructor* into *Insight* as we know it today. In the Seventies, as co-editor, he gave *Spectrum* its present appearance, and helped revitalize its contents. That is when we began a ten-year working relationship that remains a continual delight. Those essays that are not original in this volume and its companion on the Second Coming have been distilled from the *Spectrum* of those years.

This volume, specifically, has been drawn from a special issue of *Spectrum*, "Festival of the Sabbath." With that issue, Richard Emmerson, professor of English at Walla Walla College, began, as executive editor for several years, to set his high standards of excellence for *Spectrum*. Special acknowledgement must be made to Gerhard Svreck-Seiler, a psychiatrist in Vienna, who secured reproductions of the Gurk altar veil, with its depictions of Christ performing Sabbath miracles, and the seventeenth century painting, *The Month of August*, portraying Christ with His disciple in the grainfield. As he said, "The Sabbath deserves such festive luxury."

Those individuals committed to a shared quest for truth, who have made the book project of *Spectrum* and the Association of Adventist Forums possible, deserve the gratitude of all readers. The support of the following persons has been essential in making this book and its companion volume on the Second Coming a reality:

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These — and hopefully an increasing number of others — are determined that other volumes on a variety of topics will be published, enriching the life of Adventists and their friends.

Finally, I wish to thank Judy Larson for designing this volume and supervising its production.

I trust that as you join the conversation begun in this book, you will be as refreshed by the Sabbath as have the people responsible for initiating the discussion.

A CALL TO WONDER

— by Roy Branson

The holy has been described as both awesome and fascinating, at once a mysterious power and an attracting warmth. The Sabbath does not strike fear; it is God's holiness known as glory and splendor. It draws and renews. The Sabbath is God's weekly "Yes" to humanity.

Those who look to Christ's return often sound forbidding and act driven. Through the centuries, those who proclaimed the fire, smoke, rebellion and warfare of the Apocalypse often lived lives of stark denial and denunciation. The prospect of God's irresistible power becoming personal and immediate can terrify. But in the long tradition of Christians who have expected Christ to come again, those who celebrate the Sabbath have the most reason to anticipate the Second Coming as a delight. Christians who know the Sabbath know the Messiah as an honored guest. They anticipate His final arrival as the culmination of a constantly renewed friendship. For them, the Second Coming is Sabbath joy become eternal.

This volume does not repeat the arguments why Seventh-day Adventists worship on the seventh rather than the first day of the week. The writers assume that the seventh day is the day of Sabbath worship; they do not focus on puzzling borderline cases of Sabbath observance. Instead, this volume explores the meaning of the Sabbath experience. The authors, using creative under-

standings of the Sabbath found in the works of major figures in Christian theology from Augustine to Barth, place Sabbath worship within the entire panoply of Christian life and doctrine. Some, particularly Niels-Erik Andreasen and Samuele Bacchiocci, have made the Sabbath the center of their thought and writing. All have contributed to a renewal of Christian reflection on the Sabbath.

Following Ottilie Stafford's evocation of the Sabbath experience and Raymond Cottrell's exploration of the modern roots of the Christian Sabbath, Fritz Guy describes the power of the Sabbath to bring us into God's presence. After his essay on revelation and God — a typical starting point for constructive Christian thought — Sakae Kubo and Samuele Bacchiocci portray the Sabbath as both a memorial of creation and a sacrament of salvation. In different ways, Charles Scriven, Gerald Winslow, and I depict the Sabbath as an anticipation of God's culmination of history and the fellowship of eternity beyond. In the final section of the book, Niels-Erik Andreasen and John Brunt explain the continuing relevance of the biblical Sabbath to contemporary issues of the moral life.

Because the Sabbath is much more than a legal requirement or intellectual exercise, this book includes not only the writings of theologians, but musical and artistic portrayals of the Sabbath. "The Sacred Anthem" is an act of praise by members of the committee that produced the new Seventh-day Adventist hymnal (where this hymn also appears).

Hitherto overlooked by art historians and Christian theologians, the considerable body of Christian art depicting the Sabbath in the Bible, ranging from early mosaics and medieval manuscripts to present-day wall decorations, is featured throughout this volume. The monarchical God of creation, sitting on a throne found in twelfth and thirteenth-century Byzantine mosaics, leads to seventeenth-century portrayals of a typical Flemish farm scene, with Christ and His disciples plucking grain on Sabbath and debating the Pharisees. Nineteenth century drawings of a brooding, somewhat mysterious God, become in the contemporary period symbolic and abstract representations of the seventh day. Rather than pale or austere, the Sabbath has been depicted through the centuries as

dramatic and vivid.

The motivation for the writing, music and art in this volume has best been expressed by Karl Barth, when he exclaimed with "a certain awe, the radical importance, the almost monstrous range of the Sabbath commandment This commandment is total. It discovers and claims man in his depths and from his utmost bounds." The Sabbath calls humanity to freshness and wonder. The Sabbath is an invitation to celebrate creation and discover a festival of grace.

THESE BRIGHT ENDS OF TIME

— by Ottilie Stafford

The bond of time that holds our lives together, giving them continuity and shape, makes it possible for us to place ourselves in history. Memory also makes possible our sense of our own histories. Time measurements have always been of great significance. Rituals that mark off segments of time tie our todays to our yesterdays and our lives to those of others. In rituals, the world stops and remembers, for memory is a central part of our time-recording. It is an important part of our New Years, our birthdays, our anniversaries, our Sabbaths.

We have many ways to record time, some solemn and some festive, some private and some public. We follow annual rituals around the birthday cake, singing familiar songs and blowing out tiny candles. Whatever for? Every December 31 a strange ritual takes place. The daily movement of the shadow of night around the earth is followed, a number of hours later, by a movement of sound, an edge of noise, a blast of horn-blowing, shouting, band-playing, balloon-bursting celebration moving around the earth at the exact pace with which night's shadow has moved. Why do we follow such a strange custom on New Year's Eve? Why this annual piping in of midnight?

We know that 12:01 of January 1 will be little different from 11:59 of December 31. But, nevertheless, much of the world stops to direct its attention to the new notch being put on the record of our passing years, the number-

ing of our days. Weeks and years say the story of our lives and take us back to their beginnings.

Centennials and bicentennials mark longer lives—those of nations and of cultures. We cannot ignore these occasions; they remind us of what we have been, of how long we have been traveling this way. But throw away our clocks and calendars and historical chronologies, and the sun would rise every day to tell us it is time to work; the darkness would descend every night to tell us it is time to sleep; we would know the time for planting gardens, the time for shoveling snow, without marking off weeks, counting years, measuring decades, cataloguing centuries. Life would tell us when we have matured, when we are growing old, when we have lived out our lives.

Do we think perhaps that by recording in a diary the record of our lives' precise dates, by the careful measurement of time with accurate instruments, that we are, by measuring it, mastering it? Yet, time eludes us, we cannot arrest its advance, we cannot forget its cold blast bebind our backs. We try to humanize it, to place controls on it, to record it in measured segments, but all we really do is observe it; still it eludes us.

For it is not a human dimension. We can master space. Put an individual in a wilderness, and he will immediately make a clearing, build a hut, plant a garden, make a part of its space his own. He can live in it, wall it in, protect it from invasion, put up signs: KEEP OFF THE GRASS. TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED. The law protects his space. What law protects his time? Put him in a cave, and he will paint pictures on the wall, put down carpets, measure off an entrance that is his. Put him in a college residence hall made up of identical rooms, and he will rearrange furniture, hang up posters, set personal possessions around the room as symbols that *he* is the master of this space; his personality alters it, possesses it, asserts his dominion over it.

Even around ourselves we set up controls over space. Invade an individual's personal space, the room he must have to feel comfortable—invade it too closely and he will give you a shove, back off, or step on your toes and threaten worse violence, to protect the space which he must have in order to be comfortable.

And we master space in more permanent ways. The architect encloses spaces in great structures, puts domes over football fields, encloses shopping malls, throws up serpentine walls to shut out sounds, builds vast worship areas of stone and stained glass, sends up to the skies vertically stacked housing, tunnels down into the ground to store cars, puts a colossus over the harbor entrance and an arch as an entrance to the West. We marvel at the great stone structures standing in circles in the middle of a stoneless English plain, built by a lost civilization as their own way of marking off time. The space they mastered still records their efforts, but time has erased all record of who they were and where they came from and why they constructed Stonehenge.

We are always fascinated by the mysterious, the unknown, the unfathomable. We cannot look out far nor in deep, but we would rather gaze at the unfathomable than explore the familiar. So it is time that obsesses us. It is time that we are distressed by. It is time that calls forth the great human cry of sadness or of protest.

The Hebrew felt it in Old Testament times:

> Man that is born of a woman
> is of few days, and full of trouble.
> He comes forth like a flower, and withers;
> he flees like a shadow, and continues not.

The sixteenth century felt it as the century neared its close:

> Beauty is but a flower
> which wrinkles will devour;
> Brightness falls from the air;
> Queens have died young and fair,
> Dust hath closed Helen's eye . . .

The seventeenth century, in particular, felt it, perhaps because of the breaking up of all its certainties:

> Golden lads and girls all must,
> As chimney sweepers, come to dust.
>
> How small a part of time they share
> That are so wondrous sweet and fair!
>
> The bright day is done

And we are for the dark.

Time sweeps through Shakespeare's sonnets, toppling monuments, carrying individuals into oblivion, covering civilizations with the sediment of ages. It moves through the works of Proust, Tolstoy, Thackeray and Faulkner as well as those of scores of their fellow writers, forcing us to admit the "change and decay in all around I see." And it is most forcefully found in "The Great Dirge of the World," the ninetieth Psalm:

For all our days pass away under thy wrath
our years come to an end like a sigh.
The years of our life are threescore and ten,
or even by reason of strength fourscore;
Yet their span is but toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

That psalm used to bother me. I preferred Shakespeare's fatalistic statement:

Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither.
Ripeness is all.

Marvell, I thought, had a better answer to the problem:

Though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we still make him run.

Even Dylan Thomas' protest seemed somehow more humanly defensible:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Psalm 90, that great dirge, seemed to me to be one of the most mournful of all human responses to time's destructive power. Its ending did not solve any problem, nor move in any direction that was comforting. Placing the eternal God at the beginning and the ending of the psalm only underscored how ephemeral man's life really was. But the psalms keep speaking, and the longer they are listened to, the more they have to say. Gradually, the meaning of Psalm 90 grew in my mind.

That God is He who masters time, who bridges it, who towers over it like a colossus from everlasting to everlast-

ing — spanning all rising, falling and obliterating of individuals, of nations, all the endings and beginnings of days, weeks and years — the psalm makes that point clearly. But that makes even more poignant the human impermanence, the short puff of vapor that is each person's existence. That life can be happy some of the time, even though it is short, *is* no answer to the problem.

Then, one day I was listening to the eighth psalm being read, and heard these words:

> When I look at thy heavens, the work of
> thy fingers,
> the moon and the stars which thou hast
> established —

In my mind there was an echo of something, something I was reminded of that I tried to recover . . . that word *established.* That was where Psalm 90 ended:

> Establish thou the work of our hands
> yea, the work of our hands, establish
> thou it.

Does God, whose creation included the very establishment of time, who set the great timekeepers in the heavens, whose structures mastered and formed the days, weeks and seasons that act upon men's lives, does that same creative power whose creature I am, take the work of *my* hands, the work of His creatures' creations, and set them in His timeless architectures?

Every year's end I hear echoing in the back of my mind a poem of Richard Wilbur. He compares the perfection of a fern

> That lays its fragile cheek against a stone
> a million years

to the people who were caught in the destruction at Pompeii, where

> The little dog lay curled and did not rise
> But slept the deeper as the ashes rose
> And found the people incomplete, and froze
> The random hands, the loose unready eyes
> Of men expecting yet another sun
> To do the shapely thing they had not done.

The shapely thing we have not done. That is what haunts us at the end of the weeks, years, decades and centuries. What beautiful structures we intend to create with our lives, with our work, and how seldom we finish the shapely thing we would do. Wilbur goes on:

> We fray into the future, rarely wrought
> Save in the tapestries of afterthought.
> More time, more time.

We fray into the future. Perhaps our need for anniversaries of the past and celebrations of the new comes from wanting to shape, to structure what we are doing. Yet, we are always caught at the sudden ends of time with random actions and with unready minds.

But Psalm 90 contains the answer to Wilbur's cry, to the desire to shape a life that keeps slipping and sliding and being filled with imprecision and inadequacy, fraying out around the edges, never what was intended.

The great creative God, whose presence from everlasting to everlasting completed all His creation, can complete with His creative power the lives and the works of His creatures. Then, change and decay are the illusions; changelessness, the reality. Inadequacy and imperfection are pieced out by God's creative goodness; and the great dirge of the world, the human cry that has echoed through the centuries from every civilization, can be turned into a song of joy.

Those reflections return us to the Sabbath and the meaning caught up on its symbols.

We all think of the Sabbath as a reminder of God's creative power. His presence at the beginning of time when chaos and disorder were shaped by His word and the formless seas given dimensions, when the moon and the stars were established, is told anew every seventh day. The mastery of time is implicit in all the Sabbath symbolism. God shapes a period of time as we shape a dimension of space, constructing the great architecture of the Sabbath as we construct a dwelling place, filling it with evidences of His nature, as we fill our rooms and houses and spaces with objects that speak of our personalities. It is His holy time, filled with quietness and sweetness and power, where we enter and worship. We

The Sacred Anthem

WALLOWA 8.6.8.6.5.8.6.8.6.

Ottilie Stafford, 1984 (1921-) *Melvin West, 1984 (1930-)*



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SABBATH

prepare our own spaces for the Sabbath, clean our houses, light the candles, lay the fire, prepare the special meal; but He prepares the time, and we enter that time not to fill it up with our concerns, our work or our wishes, for it has already been filled by Him with holiness and the worship in which the joyous creation sings.

But the Sabbath is not only a day of remembrance of creation, it is also a day that rejoices in the completion of the creation. It is God the completer, the finisher, who rejoices in the Sabbath rest, the day of perfection. All the days of the week have been incomplete and unfinished until they are shaped by this last day. It is the day which promises us not just a future re-creation, but a completion of all that is incomplete in our lives, that promises the establishment of our lives and of our works in the timeless creation of the Holy One, that promises our restlessness will find rest in God's rest.

The ninetieth psalm intends the sorrow of the world's change and decay to conclude in joyous recognition of what God's creative power does in our lives and with the work of our hands. Then, how carefully that work must he done by God's creatures. How finely we must work, how thoughtfully, how thoroughly. How can God establish in His glorious creation what has been done with carelessness, with shabbiness, with indifference, with contempt? We may not be able to escape the sense of incompletion, of fraying into the future; but we can, in our own fragile and fleeting work, make it as honest, as beautiful and as good as it is humanly possible to make it.

Each recurring Sabbath brings a reminder of God's power to accomplish and to complete. Each Sabbath is a prayer, a turning to the Creator. By our Sabbath worship, we say: Make us worthy to be a part of Your creation. Make our words poems, psalms of hope and praise. Make our acts a part of the order and brightness that Your presence calls forth. Help us to enter into the holy time of Your holiday with hope and with the joyous knowledge that what we cannot complete You will finish; that what we cannot comprehend You will illuminate. And out of all that seems to be failure and change and decay, teach us to pray: Oh, Thou that changest not, abide with me.

SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS AND ADVENTISTS: A Common Heritage

— by Raymond F. Cottrell

One Sunday morning early in 1844, Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist-Adventist minister whose circuit included the Washington (New Hampshire) Christian church, conducted the communion service there. Present was a middle-aged woman, Mrs. Rachel Oakes (later Preston). In a subsequent conversation with Wheeler, Mrs. Oakes witnessed to her belief, as a Seventh Day Baptist, that the seventh day of the week is the Bible Sabbath. A few weeks later, Pastor Wheeler kept his first Sabbath and on the same March day preached a sermon about the Sabbath. Many of his parishioners followed him, and eventually Rachel Oakes Preston became an Adventist. Pastor Wheeler was the first Adventist to observe the seventh-day Sabbath; Mrs. Preston was one of the first Sabbathkeepers to become an Adventist. They became the first sabbatarian Adventists, and the Washington church the first sabbatarian Adventist congregation.[1] Seventh-day Adventists are happy to recognize their debt to the Seventh Day Baptists for this important facet of Adventist belief.

On the Continent and in England, sabbatarian Baptists trace their spiritual ancestry to the Anabaptist movement of Reformation times, and many of the Anabaptists are said to have observed the seventh-day Sabbath. In 1552 many in England were known as sabbatarians, and many conscientious and independent thinkers in the reign of

Elizabeth (1558-1603) advocated the seventh day.[2] As sixteenth century Englishmen began reading the Bible in the vernacular translations of William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale and others, a growing awareness of its witness to the sanctity of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath led to a prolonged public debate that continued well into the eighteenth century. This debate attracted numerous prominent persons. Among numerous polemics against the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath were those by such writers as Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, and John Owen. "That so many eminent men even considered it a necessity" to write against the Sabbath, comments Bryan Ball, "is some indication of the impact made by the seventh day advocates, and of the strength of the arguments they produced."[3] Ball examines those arguments at considerable length. By 1650 a dozen or more English congregations were observing the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, among them the Mill Yard Seventh Day Baptist church in London.

About 1664, Stephen Mumford, of the Bell Lane Seventh Day Baptist Church, also in London, migrated to Newport, Rhode Island, where, finding no church of his own faith, he united with the Baptist church. By December 1671, he and a few other Baptist families were disfellowshipped and formed the first Seventh Day Baptist church on the North American continent, the church of Newport.[4] In 1801, at least 20 congregations and settlements of Sabbathkeepers formed the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference, with a reported membership of 1,031.[5]

In the years just before 1844, Seventh Day Baptists generally listened approvingly to the Millerite proclamation of an imminent advent, and sought to share with the Adventists their own conviction with respect to the Sabbath — seemingly in the hope of uniting the advent and Sabbath truths. The Millerite leaders, however, resented any diverting of attention from the advent to the Sabbath, which they considered an unimportant side issue. Consequently, few Seventh Day Baptists espoused the 1844 message.[6]

Early issues of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, which began publication in November 1850, testify to the indebtedness of Seventh-day Adventists to the Seventh Day Baptists for the Sabbath. On page 7 of the first issue,

James White wrote:

> We call special attention of the brethren to the articles, in this number, from the publications of the Seventh-day Baptists. They are clear, comprehensive and irrefutable. We intend to enrich the columns of the *Review and Herald* with extracts from their excellent works on the Sabbath. We also design to get out a large pamphlet, containing the same material from their publications, that we publish in this paper. Such a work, judiciously circulated, will certainly do a great amount of good.[7]

That issue of the *Review* contained four such "extracts," fully three-fourths of all the space. The second issue, in December, contained one Seventh Day Baptist article on the Sabbath along with one each from J. N. Andrews and Joseph Bates. In the 12 issues of volume one, nearly 40 percent of the space was devoted to the Sabbath. The extent to which the pioneer Seventh-day Adventists were indebted to the Seventh Day Baptists for their understanding of the Sabbath is reflected in the fact that throughout the first volume over half of the Sabbath material was reprinted from Seventh Day Baptist publications.

On the front page of the sixth issue of volume one is a poem of seven stanzas about the Sabbath, "It's Jewish," by Roswell F. Cottrell, at that time a Seventh Day Baptist minister. On October 19, 1851, Cottrell wrote James White from Mill Grove, New York, that "after some nine months of careful and cautious examination, I have just arrived at the decision [to accept the Advent message]. I believe with all my heart, it was from heaven."[8] As a Seventh-day Adventist minister, Cottrell devoted the next 40 years to the proclamation of the Sabbath *and* the imminent coming of Jesus. Repeatedly, through the columns of the *Review*, he expressed his ardent desire for the spiritual growth of Seventh Day Baptists and his hope that they would accept the Adventist faith.

Unfortunately, certain Adventists, acting on their own initiative, gradually drove a wedge between Seventh Day Baptists and Seventh-day Adventists. The years 1850 to 1880 witnessed relatively rapid growth of Seventh-day Adventists and a corresponding occasional loss of Seventh

Day Baptists to the Adventists. This loss might have been sustained with a minimum of misunderstanding except for several instances of the traumatic breakup of a Seventh Day Baptist church by Adventists whose crude tactics aroused distrust and resentment that lingered for many years. Articles about "sheep stealing" appeared in journals on both sides.[9]

Despite these unfortunate incidents, Seventh-day Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists continued to take a fraternal interest in each other. In 1869, the Adventist General Conference proposed an exchange of observers at their respective General Conference sessions. At their 1870 session, the Seventh Day Baptists welcomed Roswell Cottrell to "take part in their deliberations" and voted "cooperation with the Seventh-day Adventists, but without compromising distinctive principles." In the years 1871 to 1873, J. N. Andrews and Uriah Smith alternated as Adventist representatives at the Baptist General Conference sessions.

In 1876, "Elder James White appeared as a delegate from the Adventists, and, later, gave an address on the relations of the two denominations."[10] White wrote in an 1879 issue of the *Review:*

> Both bodies have a specific work to do. God bless them both in all their efforts for its accomplishment. The field is a wide one. And we further recommend that Seventh-day Adventists in their aggressive work avoid laboring to build up a Seventh-day Adventist church where Seventh Day Baptist churches are already established.[11]

At the Baptist session in 1879, Nathan Wardner, the Baptist representative to the Adventists, "expressed the opinion that that people [the Adventists] were modifying in their sentiments; and that each change brought them nearer to us in belief." Their minutes for that session recorded that "Elder James White, of the Adventists, was introduced and welcomed to a seat in our Conference; and his report of their prosperity was met by a resolution expressing fraternal joy."[12] The tradition of exchanging observers continues to this day.

The historic Seventh Day Baptist concept of the Sab-

bath was built on explicit statements of Scripture. The Sabbath command memorializes the Creator-creature relationship, and so does the day. The fourth commandment is not an inherently moral law in the strict sense of the word — like the commands against murder, adultery and theft, whose rationale is self-evident to conscientious people — but a positive precept that could not be known except by revelation. God intended the Sabbath for all mankind, and it cannot be altered by the church.

In historic Seventh Day Baptist thought, the Sabbath also has an eschatological dimension. In a great future crisis, truth will be in the balance (as foretold in Daniel 7:25). "The rest of the holy Sabbath" is "an earnest to God's people, of that eternal rest, which is reserved for them in heaven," an earthly "type" of a heavenly "antitype." This perspective argues for the perpetuity of the Sabbath:

> Now it is the nature of a type to continue until its use is superseded by the antitype.... The earthly Sabbath, then, being a type of the heavenly [rest], it must continue till all the people of God shall have entered into their eternal rest; when there will be no more occasion for it. In other words, it must continue to the end of the world.[13]

The Sabbath is thus both a memorial of the perfect world as it came forth from the hand of the Creator, and a type of the earth made new. It bridges the great interregnum of time and sin.

The Sabbath means more than physical rest. We are to "search and cleanse our hearts from the cares of the world, . . . to reflect upon the tender care which God has exercised over us," and "to see what improvement we have made of the last Sabbath's instruction." We are to engage in prayer and the reading of the Scripture, and to converse upon religious subjects. We are to attend the Sabbath services and participate actively in them, in order that they may have "an important influence upon us during the succeeding week and . . . look forward with pleasure for the return of the weekly day of rest."[14]

It would be difficult to draw a distinction between the historic Seventh Day Baptist concept of the Sabbath and that of Seventh-day Adventists. As the early issues of the

Review and Herald make evident, we gratefully appropriated their well-developed understanding of the Sabbath, without modification, and made it our own.

Almost exclusively until recent years, Seventh Day Baptists emphasized Sabbath observance as man's proper response to a divine command — as the Sabbath is, of course, presented in the Bible. This was the basis on which Rachel Oakes Preston witnessed in Washington, New Hampshire; and Seventh-day Adventists have followed this approach. God commands; it is our duty to obey.

More recently, at least some Seventh Day Baptists have been looking at the Sabbath from the added perspective of our need for it — as a gracious provision by a wise Creator to enable us to cope with the frenetic rush of the modern world. This approach makes the Sabbath more important today than in any previous generation. The Sabbath is the same, and man's duty with respect to it is the same. But instead of keeping it *only* because God requires it, there is emphasis on the Creator's purpose in giving man the Sabbath, on its intrinsic value, and on an intelligent observance of it. Ahva J. C. Bond aptly expressed this new perspective in the terse statement: "It is God's Sabbath; he made it," and "it is man's Sabbath; he needs it."[15]

An understanding and appreciation of the value of the Sabbath provides a more effective motivation for keeping it, and results in greater blessing than mere rote compliance with the Sabbath command can provide. In fact, true Sabbath observance is possible only when a person understands the purpose of the Creator in consecrating it as holy time, and chooses to keep it, not only because his creatureliness obliges him to do so, but also because, as a rational being, he sincerely desires to enter into the true Sabbath rest. This new emphasis sets the tone for Herbert E. Saunders' book, *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Recreation*, [16] which is reminiscent of Abraham Heschel's classic, *The Sabbath*. Every thoughtful Seventh-day Adventist might profitably read both of these books. Saunders quotes from Heschel more than 20 times (and several times from M. L. Andreasen).

According to Saunders, the Sabbath is a continuing

symbol of God's presence in the world, a "perfect link between God and our race," a constant reminder of the Creator's interest in us and of our creatureliness in relation to Him as our Father.[17] "Man was God's crowning achievement, and the Sabbath became the memorial of that achievement." Its observance is a supreme expression of loyalty to Him.[18] Neglect of the Sabbath leads to forgetfulness of the God of Creation and the act of creation. Conversely, "the Sabbath remembered, God cannot be forgotten."[19]

According to Saunders, the Sabbath is a symbol that time is more important than the material things that occupy space. It symbolizes God's activity as well as His presence in time. "It is the recognition of the sanctity of time that leads us to an understanding of the Sabbath." For six days each week, we are concerned primarily with space and the things that occupy space; on the seventh we celebrate the holiness of time. The Sabbath is rest after work and consecrated rest demands consecrated work. The seventh day of the week thus sanctifies the six that precede it, if both are made what God intended them to be. The Sabbath is the cornerstone of time rejected by modern builders.[20]

The Sabbath stands not only at the apex of God's creative activity, but also of His redeeming power, and is a symbol of both.[21] It is a symbol of true spirituality and a perfect representation of true spiritual life, and Sabbathkeeping is an accurate barometer of that life.[22] It is time set apart for renewal, for spiritual restoration and reconciliation.[23] "The Sabbath raised man from the level of earthly existence to the plane of the spirit."[24]

The Sabbath is also a symbol and an "example" of the world to come. Entering into its true spirit, "we have some idea of what heaven and eternity will be like for we have experienced the presence of the Father."[25] Again Saunders approvingly quotes Heschel:

> The essence of the world to come is Sabbath eternal, and the seventh day in time is an example of eternity . . . a foretaste of the world to come; . . . a token of eternity.

Unless we enjoy the taste of the Sabbath here, in time, we

will be unable to enjoy the taste of the world to come.[26]

And how shall we keep Sabbath? Saunders asks. First, we must understand it. A person should do on the Sabbath that which leads toward an understanding of God's will. Anything that detracts from such contemplation or that allows one to forget it is the Sabbath, any use of the Sabbath hours that interfere with its purpose, in any way or to any extent, is a violation of the Sabbath. Conversely, word or conduct that does not hinder one's own Christian growth or that of others, directly or indirectly, is appropriate. Unless we find God in the Sabbath, it is meaningless. There is no fixed human standard for observance; a person's conscience is to be his guide.[27]

Saunders devotes one section to the idea of the Sabbath as a day designed to bind the family together. "The Sabbath kept must be a Sabbath shared," he says, and sharing begins at home. The Jewish people make the Sabbath a significant family experience. It provides for a renewal of family ties, and for relating personally to members of the family and their needs. "Save the Sabbath and it will go a long way toward saving the family," he quotes George Bernard Shaw.[28]

The author repeatedly stresses the relevance of the Sabbath in the modern world. Far from being outmoded, it provides the very therapy modern man needs, the therapy of silence and quietness amid the pressures of a madly rushing, neurotic society; it dispels the frustrations of the present age.[29] In a world that tends to depersonalize people and transform them into robots, it makes each individual important; it restores the personal quality of life.[30]

Like Heschel, Saunders finds in the Sabbath "a different climate" from the other days of the week, an air that "surrounds us like spring," an oasis of tranquillity, serenity, peace and repose.[31] Again, like Heschel, he sees the Sabbath as a "sanctuary built for us in time," a "regular moment in time when men and God meet and share together in spiritual and living fellowship,"[32] an "island of stillness" in the "tempestuous ocean of time and toil."[33]

The Sabbath is the only point of belief on which the Baptists and Seventh Day Baptists differ. Saunders specifically cites it as the "only just reason for our denomina-

tional existence, separate from other Baptists."[34] This suggests the question, Is commitment to the Sabbath, in and of itself, sufficient reason to maintain a separate church organization? The continuing existence of Seventh Day Baptists implies that they believe this to be so; their dwindling membership implies that it is not so. Their 1803 U. S. membership stood at 1,130; in 1844, it had grown to nearly 6,100; in 1863, to 6,516 (compared with about 3,500 Seventh-day Adventists). In 1902 it peaked at 9,292 and has been gradually declining ever since. Today, it is back to 5,125.[35] In 1803, there was one Seventh Day Baptist to every 4,698 of the U.S. population; in 1976, the ratio was one to every 43,685 proportionately one-ninth as large as 178 years ago.

These considerations lead Saunders to conclude that "something is going to happen soon, if the Sabbath and all that it stands for in the Christian context is not to be lost."[36] "Either the Sabbath has meaning for this age or it does not. If not, it is time we found out and extended our energies into other areas of concern."[37]

This concept of the Sabbath gives Seventh Day Baptists "a tremendous responsibility." "The time has come. The era of Sabbath need has arrived and we have been in existence for lo these many years because, I believe, we have been saved 'for such a time as this.'"[38]

Perhaps there is still something of value we can learn about the Sabbath from our Seventh Day Baptist friends. We are grateful to them for their devoted witness to the seventh-day Sabbath, which in God's providence brought it to our attention and made it a vital part of our belief and life as Seventh-day Adventists.

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17. *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 21, 25, 29, 59-60, 63-64, 75.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 92.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 58-59, 62.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 57-59, 83.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 87.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11, 54.
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36. Saunders, p. 55.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

THE PRESENCE OF ULTIMACY

— by Fritz Guy

To the extent that a religious symbol "participates in that to which it points,"[1] the Sabbath is invested with the relatedness and the ultimacy of God. This means that to experience the Sabbath is to affirm these two qualities of God, and to deliberately disregard the Sabbath symbolizes a denial of them. According to Adventist theology, a misrepresentation of the nature of God's relatedness and ultimacy was the very point over which the "great controversy" began in the first place, and over which sin was first actualized in our world.[2]

God's relatedness and ultimacy are a theological polarity[3] — a pair of elements or ideas that mutually complement and at the same time mutually limit each other. Other examples of this kind of polarity in our understanding of God include the threeness and oneness of the Trinity, and the humanity and deity of Jesus. In each instance, the meaning of one element of the polarity can be adequately understood only in relation to the other. So the idea of the relatedness of God to human being makes sense only in connection with the idea of the ultimacy of God — and vice versa. Both elements of this polarity, along with the polarity itself, are symbolized by the Sabbath.

Characteristically, each religious symbol has a dual function. It represents something other (and more) than itself, and it also represents that "other" (and "more").[4]

Thus the "meaning" and the "experience" of the symbol are inseparable in actuality, even if it is sometimes useful to distinguish them theoretically in order to talk about them one at a time in the interest of clarity. The Lord's Supper, for instance, as a symbol of atonement refers back to the death of Jesus as a historical event, but it is also a means by which we can now encounter, and experience more deeply, the significance of that event for our own religious life. Similarly, as a symbol of the relatedness and ultimacy of God, the Sabbath both points to these two qualities and is a means by which they can be experienced.

We can readily identify four expressions of God's relatedness to human being, as described in the biblical revelation. All of these expressions are comprised in the idea of a "living God,"[5] and all of them are symbolized by the Sabbath.

1) The initial expression of the relatedness of God is the original *creation.* At first glance, creation might seem to be a unilateral, one-sided affair; obviously, the Creator is active, and the created reality is acted upon. But this view turns out to be too simple. For it can hardly be supposed that what God has created does not matter to Him — as if He had no interest in the consequences of His creativity. Furthermore, whatever God creates, He allows to be itself. He lets it bave its own integrity and dignity, and so it has the potential of affecting not only other created reality hut even its Creator. This is particularly the case in the creation of personal, free being, such as angelic or human reality.

As every reader of the Old Testament knows, the first theological meaning of the Sabbath is its celebration of God's creative activity.[8] This meaning is evident at the very begining of the story of humanity, in the designation of the Sabbath as part of the creation of our world. Although the creation narrative itself includes no explicit statement that every seventh day is to be a Sabbath for human being, this intention is surely implied in the affirmation that "God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it" (Gen 2:3). Otherwise, this particular blessing and sanctification of a day would have no meaning or rele-

vance. In any case, the fourth commandment of the decalogue bases the significance of the Sabbath squarely on the fact that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day" (Ex. 20:11). And a little later in the narrative, God is quoted as saying that the Sabbath is "a sign between me and the people of Israel, that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth" (Ex. 31:17).

The Sabbath is thus a celebration of the fact that God is directly related to the world by His own free, deliberate act of creation. This fact is important not only for what it says about the world, which has value and is "good" because it is the result of God's own creativity, but also for what it says about God. His creative intention is actualized in the production of a kind of reality that is distinct and different from Himself and yet "in His own image" (Gen. 1:27). A free God has created human being with the awesome liberty to reject and defy its Creator.

2) God's relatedness to human being is also expressed in His *presence* in human existence. God did not create humanity and then leave it alone. He wanted to be with it and to be actively present in its life. This presence occurs in several different modes and is visible at different points of human experience.

The various modes of God's general, continuing and comprehensive presence may be seen in such things as (a) the maintenence of the "natural order" of physical, chemical and biological processes that are the necessary condition for human life; (b) the corporate experience of worship, "where two or three are gathered" in Christ's name (Matt. 18:20); and (c) the ministry of the Holy Spirit in individual human minds.

The various modes of God's special, particular presence also may be seen (a) in certain historical events, especially in the history of Israel and the earliest Christian community; (b) in places of special sacredness, such as the Hebrew tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem; (c) in the ancient prophetic ministry of persons like Hosea, Jeremiah and John the Baptist, and in the more recent prophetic ministry of Ellen White; and (d) in miracles of many kinds, both biblical and modern.

The one absolutely unique mode of God's presence in human existence is the mission of Jesus as "God with us" (Matt. 1 : 22-23). God is God not only in creating a million blazing galaxies, but also (and especially) in being with the personal reality He has created and in making His presence known.

As a day of rest, of liberation from the secular pressures and mundane duties that crowd the previous six days, the Sabbath is a day for worship, for celebrating God's presence. "Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation; you shall do no work; it is a sahbath to the Lord in all your dwellings" (Lev. 23 : 3).

The Sabbath is an opportunity to *recognize* God's presence, to become more acutely aware of it in its various general and special modes. It brings with it God's love for, and His claim on, human being. In this way, the primal relationship of the Creator and the created reality is continued and also enriched as it is actualized in ever new ways. God is known not merely as the original architect, engineer and builder, but also as the source of energy, the incentive for activity. The Sabbath is also an opportunity to *reflect on* the implications of this presence for the nature and meaning of our own existence — for its security and its possibilities. And the Sabbath is an opportunity to *respond to* the presence of God in profound gratitude for this grace and in decision to shape our future to be an appropriate expression of our gratitude. It is in this sense — as a day of liheration for worship that is the fullest possible experience of God's presence — that "the Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2 : 28). In another sense, however, it is not merely an *opportunity* to recognize, reflect on and respond to God's presence; the Sabbath is *itself* a recognition of God in human existence.

3) Yet another expression of God's relatedness to human being is His *commitment* to humanity and its fulfillment. This commitment is initially suggested in the cessation of fundamental creative activity on the planet Earth after the creation of human being.[7] The basic process of creation was complete; it had reached its goal, and God was perfectly satisfied with the result. "God saw

everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1 : 31). So God "rested" — in somewhat the same sense that a lawyer "rests" when he has completed the presentation of his case to the judge and jury.

The commitment becomes explicit in the covenant relationship, which is repeatedly expressed in the biblical formulation, "I am your God, and you are my people."[8] As human marriage was intended to be, so God's creation of humanity was in fact — not an experiment to "see what will happen," but instead a total commitment to "make a go of it," "for better or for worse." And when the "worse" occurred, God's commitment led Him to give "his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3 : 16).

The Sabbath is a symbol of this covenant-commitment between God and human being. "The people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant" (Ex. 31 : 16).[9] But a covenant with God is a special kind of covenant. It is never made *a priori*; it is never the first word, the initiation of a relationship. Any covenant with God is made, rather, *a posteriori*; it is always a second word, so to speak, a consequence of a relationship that has already been established by God's own initiative and commitment. And this is the way it is with the covenant symbol of the Sabbath:[10] "You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you" (Ex. 31 : 13). So, as a covenant symbol, the Sabbath may be seen not only as a sign of human beings' commitment to live in relationship to God, and thus to be "His people," it may be seen also (and more fundamentally) as a sign of God's total and permanent commitment to human being; for this is where the covenant relationship necessarily begins.[11] "Hallow my sabbaths, that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I, the Lord, am your God" (Ez. 20 : 20).

4) Finally (for this discussion), God's relatedness to humanity is expressed in His *responsiveness* to human decisions and actions. Here we have the most obvious kind of relatedness — in the fact that God's action is to some sig-

nificant extent determined by the action of human being, both collective and individual. In regard to the influence of collective human being in a historical scale, the biblical witness includes a direct word from God: "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it" (Jer. 18 : 7-8). And conversely, "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I had intended to do to it" (verses 9-10).

Some major illustrations of this responsiveness of God to human action come immediately to mind. Human nature being what it is, most examples are negative: the Flood, the exile of Israel and (according to Adventist eschatology) the continuation of history into the fourth quarter of the twentieth century. Individually, the influence of human action on God's action may be less dramatic than the influence of collective action. Nonetheless, it is real and, happily, frequently positive. Whatever difficulties may be involved in understanding the effects of prayer on the outcome of human or natural events, the clear and consistent biblical evidence requires the conclusion that prayer does, in fact, result in certain kinds of divine activity that would not otherwise occur.[12]

As a celebration of creation, a day of worship and a covenant symbol, the Sabbath becomes an occasion for God's further activity in response to human decisions and actions. The Bible describes this possibility poetically:

> If you turn back your foot from the sabbath,
> from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
> and call the sabbath a delight,
> and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
> if you honor it, not going your own ways,
> or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly,
> then you shall take delight in the Lord,
> and I will make you ride upon the heights
> of the earth;
> I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for
> the mouth of the Lord hath spoken (Isa. 58 : 13-14).

Now, it is possible to understand too superficially the relationship between "honoring the sabbath" and "riding upon the heights of the earth." It is possible, for example, to suppose that the connection between the two experiences is only extrinsic and therefore arbitrary, like the connection parents sometimes make between good grades in school and a monetary reward (for example, $5 for every "A" on a semester grade report).

But such a view of the Sahbath entangles it in a form of social and economic coercion — a relation that is unworthy of the Creator and unattractive to humanity. Besides, this view fails to see the religious dynamics of the Sabbath. For the fact of the matter is that human being, individually and collectively, can be genuinely "in love with the seventh day," having discovered that the Sabbath is "a palace in time," "not an interlude but the climax of living."[13] When that happens, humanity has before it unimagined possibilities of experiencing God's creative and transforming power and unprecedented potential for spiritual development.

After a consideration of the relatedness of God, it is appropriate to put equal emphasis on the ultimacy of God. For the relatedness does not in any sense mean a relativizing or a dilution of the ultimacy. On the contrary, an understanding of the relatedness only increases our understanding of — and our admiration and respect for — the ultimacy.

The word "ultimacy" in this discussion refers to the fact that God is not only the supreme reality and value, but also the kind of reality and value beyond which nothing can even be conceptualized.[14] This is the definition of diety in the classical sense of all monotheism, whether Christian, Jewish or Islamic. It implies two further, closely related ideas. One is the idea of "holiness," which is extreamly difficult to define precisely,[15] but which evokes the sense of awe and reverence that is regularly associated with an awareness of the ultimate. The second idea is that of "otherness" or "beyondness" or "hiddenness." It refers to the fact that God, although related to the world in a variety of ways, still has His own being outside the world, beyond anything and everything that is created. This fact means that the reality of God will al-

ways involve infinitely more than can be encountered or comprehended by human being.

The ultimacy of God has two principal dimensions. In the first place, God is the ultimate *reality and power.* He is the source of His own and of all other reality and power. He is neither dependent on, nor limited by, anything outside Himself. God is, in other words, eternal and omnipotent. If He were not, He would not be God. So the fact that God is related to the world and to the human being that He has created and that His activity is in some sense determined by this created reality must be understood as a *self*-limitation of God that results from His own creative intention. That is to say, the relatedness of God comes with His decision to create and is in no way imposed on Him.

An indication of this ultimacy of God may be seen in the fact that the Sabbath is a *temporal* symbol. Here it stands in contrast (but not in contradiction) to the symbols of the bread and wine, the water and basin and towel — all of which are material objects.[16] In the first place, time, from which there is no escape for human being, but which defies every attempt to define it, is an especially apt symbol in relation to a God who is characterized not only by His "closeness" to human being but also His "beyondness." In a way, therefore, the mystery of time can remind us of the mystery of God.

In the second place, time is the "material" of human existence. When "time is up," life is over, and human being is no more. And when I give my time to something — a person, perhaps, or an endeavor — I am making an irrevocable investment; I am giving myself. A holy day is therefore an effective means by which to affirm the ultimacy of the eternal God. He is the origin of all time and the course of my own time. To Him, time is no problem, because He is the ultimate reality and power.

But God is more than the ultimate reality and power: He is also the ultimate *goodness and value.* In spite of the fact that reality and power usually seem to generate value (and therefore authority) further consideration makes it clear that this is not necessarily so. There are many familiar instances of reality without goodness, power without value, the playground bully, the domineering spouse, the

illegitimate government. So it is useful to make an explicit point of the fact that God is ultimate goodness and value, as well as the ultimate reality and power. This fact is most clearly evident in the special revelation communicated through the biblical documents, where it is discernible in the nature of God's relatedness to humanity. Once recognized, it can be formulated as a theological or philosophical corollary of the Christian "good news." In other words, the fact that "God is love" (I John 4 : 8) is intrinsically related to the fact that God is the ultimate goodness and value.

This second dimension of ultimacy is, on the one hand, the positive motivation for worship (in contrast to fear of God's power), and, on the other hand, the central issue of what Adventist theology knows as "the great controversy." It is not God's reality or power that is challenged by the enemy, and that is finally to be vindicated for the benefit of the whole universe, but His ultimate goodness.

The Sabbath, as a holy day — a day of holiness — symbolizes the ultimacy of God in both of its dimensions. It reminds us of this ultimacy, sharpens our awareness of it and gives us a means to affirm it. In this connection, we can see most clearly the particular significance of the "seventh-day-ness" of the Sabbath.

Positively, to observe the Sabbath is to acknowledge and affirm the ultimacy of God, not only in terms of His reality and Power, but also in terms of His goodness and value. For one thing, the seventh day is regarded as a Sabbath "to the Lord";[17] it is known as "the holy day of the Lord" (Isa. 58 : 13); and God is described repeatedly as referring to "my sabbaths."[18] For another thing, unlike the single day, the month and the year, the seven-day cycle has no "natural" basis. No astronomical, agricultural or physiological period gives it "practical" significance. This means that both its origin and its significance are distinctively religious: it is a commandment — and a gift — of God. In short, it is a way of saying "Yes" or "No" to the Creator. The "seventh-day-ness" of the Sabbath has this special meaning: it symbolizes God's ultimacy as reality and power and as goodness and value. The dedication of every seventh day "to the Lord" is a recognition of His lordship over all of our days — which is to say, over all of

our existence.[19]

Negatively, making the seventh day a Sabbath experience relativizes all non-transcendent values, including not only economic security and well-being but also personal and professional achievement, success and satisfaction. In this way, the Sabbath offers a useful protection against materialism and status-seeking, to whom even Christians are surprisingly (if unconsciously) obedient. For it is a day on which both "pleasure" and "business" become unimportant. Furthermore, characteristically, humans tend to identify personal success with the ultimate good. This characteristic is true especially if we are professionally engaged in some humanitarian or religious enterprise. But the Sabbath comes to us as a powerful reminder of our createdness and relativity and as a valuable opportunity to put all of our efforts and intentions into the context and perspective of God's ultimacy. It is a day primarily for rest and worship. It is not a day for pursuing the personal or professional business of our lives, however beneficent that business may be and however generously it may he motivated (although our motivations are probably much less generous than we like to think).

A recognition of the significance of the Sabbath as a symbol of God's ultimacy (as reality and power, and as goodness and value) as well as His relatedness to human being (in creation, presence, commitment and responsiveness) makes it easy to understand why the experience of the Sabbath is so important in Adventist life and thought. It is not merely a distinctive religious practice; it is also a profound theological statement. This recognition explains why the establishment of another day of worship in place of the Sabbath is regarded as a crucial departure from authentic biblical religion.[20] It also explains the eschatological significance of the Sabbath as "the seal of the living God" (Rev. 7 : 2), identifying those persons who have understood the issues of the "great controversy," have positively affirmed the ultimacy of God and are prepared for existence in an immediate relationship to God.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 42.

2. Compare Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press, 1958), p. 42. "Satan . . . had sought to falsify the word of God, and had misrepresented his plan of government, claiming that God was not just in imposing laws upon the angels; that in requiring submission and obedience from his creatures, he was seeking merely the exaltation of himself."

Outside of Adventist thought, a similar idea is put into somewhat broader terms by C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (London: Collins/Fontana, 1953), p. 92: "The whole philosophy of Hell rests on recognition of the axiom that one thing is not another thing, and, specially, that one self is not another self. My good is my good and your good is yours. What one gains another loses. Even an inanimate object is what it is by excluding all other objects from the space it occupies; if it expands, it does so by thrusting other objects aside or by absorbing them. A self does the same. With beasts the form [is] eating; for us [demons], it means the sucking of will and freedom out of a weaker self into a stronger. 'To be' *means* 'to be in competition.'"

3. The polarity of the relatedness and the ultimacy of God is an experiential corollary to the more general, ontological polarity of the immanence and transcendence of God, which is familiar in the classical tradition of Christian theology. Our particular interest here is with God and distinctively *human* being, rather than with God and the created universe in general.

4. Readers who are familiar with the theology of Paul Tillich may recognize a connection between the terms "representation" and "re-presentation" used here to identify the two functions of symbols in *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 41-43.

5. The term "living God" occurs at least 14 times in the Old Testament and 16 times in the New Testament, including the famous declaration of Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16 : 16).

6. Ellen G. White's expositions of the Sabbath commonly emphasize its importance as a symbol ("memorial") of God's creative power and activity. See, for example, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 48, 307 and 338; *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1940), pp. 281 and 288; *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1950), pp. 54

and 436-438; *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1952), pp. 250-251.

7. Compare White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 47 and 115: "All was perfect, worthy of its divine author, and He rested, not as one weary, but as well pleased with the fruits of His wisdom and goodness and the manifestations of His glory." "As regards this world, God's work of creation is completed. For 'the works were finished from the foundation of the world' (Heb. 4 : 3)."

Martin Buber, *Moses* (Oxford: East and West Library, 1946), p. 82, notes that "the Hebrew word *shabat* [which is the verb "to rest"] means exclusively to be finished with an action or a situation, not to do or not to leave someting undone. What is involved here is in essence the completion of an activity or a function, its no-longer state."

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936-63), III-1, pp. 214-215, sees important meaning in the fact that God ended His creative activity: "He was content with the creation of the world and man. He was satisfied to enter into this *relationship with this* reality distinct from Himself, to be the Creator of *this* creature, to find in *these* works of His Word the external sphere of His power and grace and the place of His revealed glory." In other words, "The reason why He refrains from further activity on the seventh day is that He has found the object of His love and has no need of further works."

8. This formulation occurs at least 28 times: Gen. 17 : 7-8; Ex. 29 : 45-46; Lev. 26 : 12, 45; Deut 14 : 4; 26 : 17-18; II Sam. 7 : 24; I Chron. 17 : 22; Isa. 51 : 15-16; Jer. 7 : 23; 11 : 4; 24 : 7; 30 : 22; 31 : 1, 33; 32 : 38; Ez. 11 : 20; 36 : 28; 37 : 23, 26-27; Hos. 1 : 9-10; 2 : 23; Zech. 8 : 8; 13 : 9; Rom. 9 : 25-26; II Cor. 6 : 16; Rev. 21 : 3.

9. The close relationship between the Sabbath and the covenant is apparent also in two instances of poetic parallelism in Isaiah 56:

> To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,
> who choose the things that please me and hold
> fast my covenant . . ." (verse 4).
> Everyone who keeps the sabbath, and does not profane it,
> and holds fast my covenant . . ." (verse 6).

10. The Sabbath is not, of course, the only biblical symbol of the covenant relationship between God and human being. In the Old Testament, there is the rainbow (Gen. 9 : 12-13) and circumcision (Gen. 17 : 10-14); and in the New Testament there is the wine of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26 : 28).

11. Compare Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1948), III, p. 350: "To those

who reverence His holy day the Sabbath is a sign that God recognizes them as His chosen people. It is a pledge that He will fulfill to them His covenant. Every soul who accepts this sign of God's government places himself under the divine, everlasting covenent. He fastens himself to the golden chain of obedience, every link of which is a promise."

12. This idea occurs frequently in the teachings of Jesus. See, for example, Matt. 7 : 7-11; 18 : 19; 21 : 22; John 14 : 13-14; 15 : 7; 16 : 24.

13. Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951), pp. 12, 14, 15.

14. This formulation derives from Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033-1109), *An Address (Proslogion)*, chapter 2: "a being than which none greater can be thought"; and from Boethius (480-542), *The Consolation of Philosophy*, book 3, prose 10: "Nothing better than God can be thought."

15. Herbert W. Richardson, *Toward an American Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 123, defines holiness in terms of the "glory" or "dignity" of God that "is the basis of His authority and gives Him the right to command." This definition is of particular interest here because it is offered in connection with a serious consideration of the theological implications of the Sabbath.

16. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, seems to overplay the contrast between time and space, giving a spiritual (and almost ontological) priority to time. This, it seems to me, is both unnecessary and unhelpful. While human being does tend to be obsessed with "the things of space" — that is, material objects of various sorts — the problem is not with their materiality (much less their spatiality), but with our obsession.

17. The translation "of the Lord," familiar from the King James Version, is not quite so accurate as the translation "to the Lord" that appears in the Revised Standard Version in Ex. 16 : 23, 25; 20 : 10; 31 : 15; 35 : 21; Deut. 5 : 14, etc.

18. Ex. 31 : 13; Lev. 19 : 3, 30; 26 : 2; Ez. 20 : 12, 20; etc.

19. Compare Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84 (1972), pp. 455-458.

20. See White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 49-51 and 433-456.



THE SEVENTH DAY OF CREATION

In this twelfth-century mosaic from a creation cycles in the nave of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo, Sicily, God sits regally on a throne, with His feet comfortably supported by a cushion.

THE EXPERIENCE OF LIBERATION

— by Sakae Kubo

The Sabbath relates to both justification and sanctification. It points to the completion of the redemptive activity of Christ as well as to His creative activity, serving as a day of joyous celebration of this redemptive act. This paper attempts to show the relationship between these themes and the Sabbath.

Man cannot save himself by works. Nothing that he performs or accomplishes is worth anything for his acceptance with God. The keeping of the Sabbath, therefore, cannot help a sinner to be justified. On the contrary, the Sabbath itself is a sign of God's grace, of the fact that salvation comes by nothing that man does but by everything that God does.

The first Sabbath kept by the first pair came on the first day after their creation. Thus, they were invited to rest not because of anything they had done but because God had finished His work. They came to the Sabbath empty-handed of any human works; all they could do was to view what God had done for them. The Sabbath, being remembered in their experience as their first day, continually reminded them that they had nothing to offer to God. They were to accept the Sabbath as God's gift to them.[1]

On the Sabbath, we are to cease from our own works. It is God's invitation to us to look away from ourselves and our works, to Him and His works. On the Sabbath, God wants to remind us that human achievements and

human works must be put aside in His presence. He wants to remind us that we cannot justify ourselves and that we must not trust in our own ability and works.

When we cease from our works, we realize that our works are not important. We can stop and the world still moves on without us. What we do, no matter how important, is not indispensable. We can stop our work, but the sustaining activity of God goes on. It is God's activity that is important, not ours. The Sabbath also tells us that God takes the initiative — He creates, He acts, He gives, He provides, He invites, He blesses, He sanctifies. We are the created recipients, the spectators, the guests.

Even what is commanded can be prostituted by man as a claim for self-righteousness. Prayer, almsgiving and fasting can be and have all been used as works of the law to claim merit before God. And it is a recognized fact that the Sabbath, too, has been prostituted in this way. But something about the Sabbath militates against this legalistic spirit: its arbitrary character. The Sabbath commandment does not merely command the keeping of a day but specifies what day this should be. The seventh day is not a natural day of worship connected with sowing or reaping, with the revolution of the sun or moon. It is not connected with any natural phenomenon in the heavens or on the earth such as are Passover, Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles and the new moons. It can be understood only by revelation as the day that memorializes God's rest from creation. Because it is somewhat of an arbitrary day, the keeping of the Sabbath on the seventh day is ultimately an act of obedient and self-renouncing faith in recognition of God's sovereignty over us.[2]

God's sovereignty over man and his time, manifested by the command to observe the Sabbath, is not limited to that day. God's special claim on us on the Sabbath does not mean that we can do as we please the rest of the week. While all time is not holy time as the Sabbath is, it is time to be lived under the recognition that God is sovereign over us and that our life always must be lived in relationship to Him and His principles.

The Sabbath command in a Jewish community where everyone keeps the Sabbath is not as great a challenge to man's autonomy as it is in a pluralistic society where

competing claims are made, where frequently the customs and practices of the society go contrary to God's commands. Such is the Sabbath in the contemporary society of the twentieth century. Not only must it seek to survive among those who espouse a Sunday-oriented world, but more so among those who recognize no day of worship. The leisure society has taken over the weekend without thought of any divine claims. The weekend is centered around selfish human pleasures. In such a context, God's claim of the seventh day is a challenge to man's autonomy. To many, such an interruption cannot be accepted. Some propose having religious services before the weekend so that the entire weekend can be enjoyed without interruption. The majority simply have no time for God. But God's claim is insistent. If we are to worship God, we can do it only His way. We cannot manipulate God and His Sabbath to our own convenience. We may accept Him or we may not. But if we do, it will have to be on God's terms, not ours.

God knows that we need more than relaxation and leisure time. Man does not live by rest, relaxation and leisure alone: he also needs God. True fulfillment comes only as he makes the kingdom of God first and learns to value the things of the spirit and of eternity more than the things of time and of matter.

The Sabbath, when understood as that which strips us of our works and our autonomy before God, cannot be used as a means of self-justification. Its very nature militates against its being used in such a way. The Sabbath is truly the sign of God's grace and sovereignty and of man's receptivity and dependence.

The Sabbath represents God's initiative and man's receptivity. Receptivity is a passive act, but it is an act. God does not force His presence upon us. Instead, He says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20, R.S.V.). His presence is ours only if we open the door. Thus, the full meaning of the Sabbath is completed only when man responds by accepting God's presence in his life.

This results in man's becoming a "new creation." But man is not simply inert matter like the earth but a dynam-

ic personal being with a will. Therefore, man as a "new creation" is not a finished product like the inanimate creation. Day by day, he must respond to God, accept God's presence in his life, and live to God. As Ellen White states: "There is no such thing as instantaneous sanctification. True sanctification is a daily work, continuing as long as life shall last."[3] With Paul, the Christian must say: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2 : 20).

It is this experience of sanctification, as well as the experience of justification, that the Sabbath signifies. For God says: "Moreover, I gave them my sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them" (Ez. 20 : 12). The Sabbath was a sign that God had chosen Israel as His holy people. It did not simply signify holiness of time, but holiness in time, or holy people. But as Ezekiel explains further, Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness, did not walk in His statutes and profaned His Sabbaths. The profanation of the Sabbath is a natural consequence of rebellion and disobedience.

The Sabbath implies a holy people, not simply a people arbitrarily set apart. God can set aside a segment of time or a piece of property and it becomes arbitrarily holy, but He cannot do the same with human beings. People must respond with a holy life, with a life of obedience. Faith must work through love (Gal. 5 : 6). Therefore, when God says that the Sabbath is a sign of sanctification, He means that it is a sign that sets His people apart by their exemplary lives of loyalty and obedience to His will and commandments.

While it has been and is still possible to "keep" the Sabbath yet live a life that denies any relationship to Jesus Christ, it is clear that this is a complete rejection of the meaning of the Sabbath. For the Sabbath points to a new creation and to a life of sanctification, holiness and obedience. Sabbathkeeping by a person who denies the Lord of the Sabbath is a complete contradiction of terms. It is like saying one can be loyal and at the same time betray one's nation. If we understand the meaning of the Sabbath as a

sign of sanctification, either we will feel uneasy about the contridiction between our lives and what the Sabbath stands for or we shall seek God's help to put our lives in harmony with the meaning of the Sabbath.

Seventh-day Adventists affirm without reservation and in the clearest and most forceful words that the just shall live by faith. No one can be saved by works apart from grace. Only through the sacrifice of Christ can anyone hope to be saved. But we also believe that faith is dead if it does not produce fruits. Ellen White says:

> He who is trying to become holy by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin. It is the grace of Christ alone, through faith, that can make us holy.[4]

As Paul says, faith works through love (Gal. 5:6), "for it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified" (Rom. 2:13). The Sabbath both signifies God's initiative and man's response, a sign of his obedience and loyalty to God. The Sabbath, with the other commandments of God, challenges man's seriousness in obeying God and tests the authenticity of his faith.

We witness today all too frequently a spineless Christianity — a great gulf separates what it says from what it does. This gulf has widened as the meaning of the Sabbath as serious obedience to God in all walks of life has been forgotten. The emphasis has been on justification without sanctification, a spurious faith without cost. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes:

> Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.[5]

In the present milieu, the Sabbath confronts us as God's challenge to our seriousness in accepting Christ. Since the world in its life and business is structured with Sunday as its rest day, the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath today demands a radical, conscious, deliberate decision to fol-

low Christ. We affirm that "*only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes.*" [6]

Bonhoeffer's last statement is supported by New Testament passages on the criterion of final judgment. For instance, Paul says: "For we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (II Cor. 5 : 10). And again: "For he will render to every man according to his works" (Rom. 2 : 6). This idea is not limited to Paul. We find it in First Peter and in Revelation. "If you invoke as Father him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile" (I Peter 1 : 7). "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done" (Rev. 22 : 11; cf. 2 : 23; 20 : 13). These passages surely do not imply that we shall be justified by our works. They imply what Bonhoeffer stated above: "Only the man who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes." Our works of faith are the means of testing whether we truly helieve, for genuine faith leads to obedience: works are the natural consequence of such faith and attest its genuineness. On the other hand, works of the law reveal a complete lack of faith in Jesus Christ but instead a trust in one's own strength and righteousness.

The Sabbath brings together this intimate relationship between justification and sanctification. As Donald Bloesch states:

> We are saved *by* grace alone, but we are saved *for* works and also *through* works in the sense that works that proceed from faith serve the advancement of our sanctification.[7]

Bloesch continues:

> . . . we must affirm God's decision for us and our decision in God. We must try to grasp the paradoxical unity of what God has done for us in Christ and what we can do in, with, and for Christ.[8]

Even in justification man has a part, for God does not justify us against our will. Our part is to accept His offer. It is not enough to claim Christ's death for us 2,000 years ago; we must demonstrate its efficacy today by a life lived

according to His will. "It is not only the perfected life of Christ in the past but the faithful life of the believer in the present that makes salvation effectual. It is not only Christ's death on the cross but the bearing of the cross by the people of the church that prepares the way for ultimate victory."[9]

The priority of justification is fundamental. It must ever be kept in mind that man alone and in his own strength cannot do anything for his salvation. Yet, we must not think of the Christian as lifeless matter on whom and for whom God does everything. God's initiative is basic but unless man responds in faith, there is no salvation for him. And the response in faith must be followed by the life of loving obedience.

The Sabbath as a symbol of justification and sanctification brings these truths together and keeps us who are prone to be one-sided from falling into either error: justification by works or antinomianism (a flippant, superficial disregard of earnest, serious obedience in the Christian life). The Sabbath itself, because of what it symbolizes, warns us that it is not sufficient merely to maintain an outward observance. True Sabbath observance means that the Christian has responded to God's claim on his life and through the Spirit daily lives his life for God. When this is done, the truth of the intimate connection of justification and sanctification becomes a living reality. The symbol is realized and the meaning of the Sabbath is incarnated.

The Sabbath relates not only to creation but also redemption. Deuteronomy 5 : 15 relates the two: "You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day." While, no doubt, there is a connection made between the servants in their midst (vs. 14) and Israel's status as servant in Egypt, suggesting that Israel should treat servants with consideration especially on the Sabbath, the emphasis in the verse on God's mighty deliverance of Israel points to the fact that the Sabbath should lend to reflection of their great deliverance from bondage. In Exodus 20, the observance of the Sabbath is connected with God as Creator; here, with God as Deliverer or Redeemer. The

idea of Creator leads to the idea of Redeemer: the two ideas are inextricably related. But from the experiential point of view, we encounter God as Redeemer before we recognize Him as Creator.

In the Old Testament, especially Deuteronomy 5 : 12-15, the ideas of redemption and creation are closely connected. The same is true, although less explicitly, in the New Testament. Hans Walter Wolff makes a connection between the completion of God's creative activity and Jesus' words ("It is finished") as He dies.[10] With the utterance of those words the veil of the temple was rent in twain, signifying that the barrier between God and man was removed in the reconciling act of Christ. The work of redemption was completed, finished. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Cor. 5 : 19). As it was on the sixth day of the first week when God had finished His creative work, so it was on the sixth day of passion week when Christ had completed His redemptive work. As, at the beginning, the Creator rested on the seventh day, so now the Redeemer rested on the seventh day.

While the Sabbath memorializes the once-for-all redemptive activity of Christ, the redemption of each person is considered a "new creation." "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (II Cor. 5 : 7). In this sense also, creation and redemption are closely related. The work of Christ as Redeemer is viewed as a creative act. The result of His work as Redeemer is a "new creation." Thus, both Christ's general redemptive activity in passion week and His specific redemption of ourselves as individuals are memorialized on the Sabbath. The Sabbath as a memorial does not deal merely with the general redemptive activity of Christ but also with our individual redemption; not only with the objective act of Christ but also with our subjective response to it.

As the Sabbath memorializes the completed activity of creation, so it now also memorializes the finished redemptive activity of the new creation in Christ. The Christian, as he celebrates the Sabbath, rejoices not only in God's natural creation but also in God's spiritual creation. He recognizes that "the power that created all things is the power that recreates the soul in His own likeness." [11] He

celebrates God's creative activity in his life as the Sabbath recalls to his mind the time of his re-creation, his baptism. The Sabbath, then, is a weekly reminder of the once-and-for-all completed creation event, the once-and-for-all completed redemption of Christ, and also the same weekly reminder of the once-and-for-all completed new creation.

The Sabbath can only be a sign of God's creative power in us if we indeed manifest in our persons the evidence of that power. We must in fact be a "new creation." The Sabbath has no meaning at all unless there is a conjunction of God's creative power and its accomplished result in the life of the Sabbathkeeper. Holiness of time must be matched by holiness of being. Holiness *of* time must become holiness *in* time. If this is true, Sabbathkeeping can never become a legalistic or nominal act. Truly, the symbol participates in the reality for which it stands. The Sabbath does not become an abstract entity, a mere external sign, for the Christian participant (by the keeping of the Sabbath) with the reality of the "new creation" which the day symbolizes. The Sabbath as a sign of the creation of the world becomes personally meaningful only if the Sabbath is first of all a sign of our "new creation."

The Sabbath has always had a joyful aspect to it. Isaiah called it "a delight" (Isa. 58 : 13). The Jews traditionally considered the Sahhath a day of delight to the extent that they forbade fasting on it. According to Samuel Dresner, "Even the seven days of *shivah*, the mourning period, are interrupted for the Sabbath. The famous story from the Talmud of how Beruriah, the wife of Rabbi Meir, delayed telling her husband the terrible news of the death of their two sons until the Sabbath had passed and night had fallen, became a living example in the countless Jewish homes through the ages, that one must take every precaution to preserve the sweet peace and joy of the Sabbath."[12]

The Jews try in many ways to make the Sabbath a special day of delight. Adventists are likewise encouraged by Ellen White to make the Sabbath special. Parents especially are admonished to do all in their power to "make the Sabbath . . . the most joyful day of the week. They can lead their children to regard it as a delight, the day of days, the holy of the Lord, honorable."[13]

The Sabbath as a day of delight and joy takes on a heightened meaning for Christians because it points to the redemptive act of Christ which overshadows that of Moses as well as to our personal redemption from the bondage of sin. It calls to mind our liberation from the bondage of sin, our transfer from the world of darkness into the kingdom of light. It is well to "remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2 : 12, 13).

The Sabbatb is a foundation of worship because it underscores the distinction between Creator and creatures which is the basis of worship. The Sabbath is also a ground of worship in that it is a festival of deliverance and redemption. This celebration takes place in the Sabbath worship services. God's people come together to praise God for His mighty acts in word, prayer and hymn; to hear again God's word proclaimed, His mighty acts described, and the good news of salvation announced; to accept this good news and to commit themselves anew to this God of grace by word and by symbol in their offerings to God. The central focus of every worship service must be what God has done for His people through Jesus Christ. The Sabbath is the celebration of redemption.

There can be no thought of merit in attendance at worship services. God's people come because of what God has done. They worship with hearts grateful for the great deliverance they have received in Jesus Christ. They are like a gathering of men and women who have been rescued by lifeguards from drowning, or prisoners of war who have been delivered by a conquering general from imprisonment. They worship without any thought of reward but only of gratitude and praise. They take part in the worship service joyfully, not apathetically or mechanically. Enthusiastically they sing hymns of praise to their Benefactor; cheerfully they bring their offerings because they remember what He has given them. With Paul they joyfully exult, "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!" (II Cor. 9 : 15).

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Karl Barth has an excellent treatment of this aspect of the Sabbath in his *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, p. 4.

2. See Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84 (1972), pp. 457-458.

3. Ellen G. White, *The Sanctified Life* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1937), p. 9.

4. Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1892), p. 65.

5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, revised and unabridged edition (New York: Macmillan, 1959), p. 47.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

7. Donald Bloesch, *The Christian Life and Salvation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 17.

8. *Ibid.*

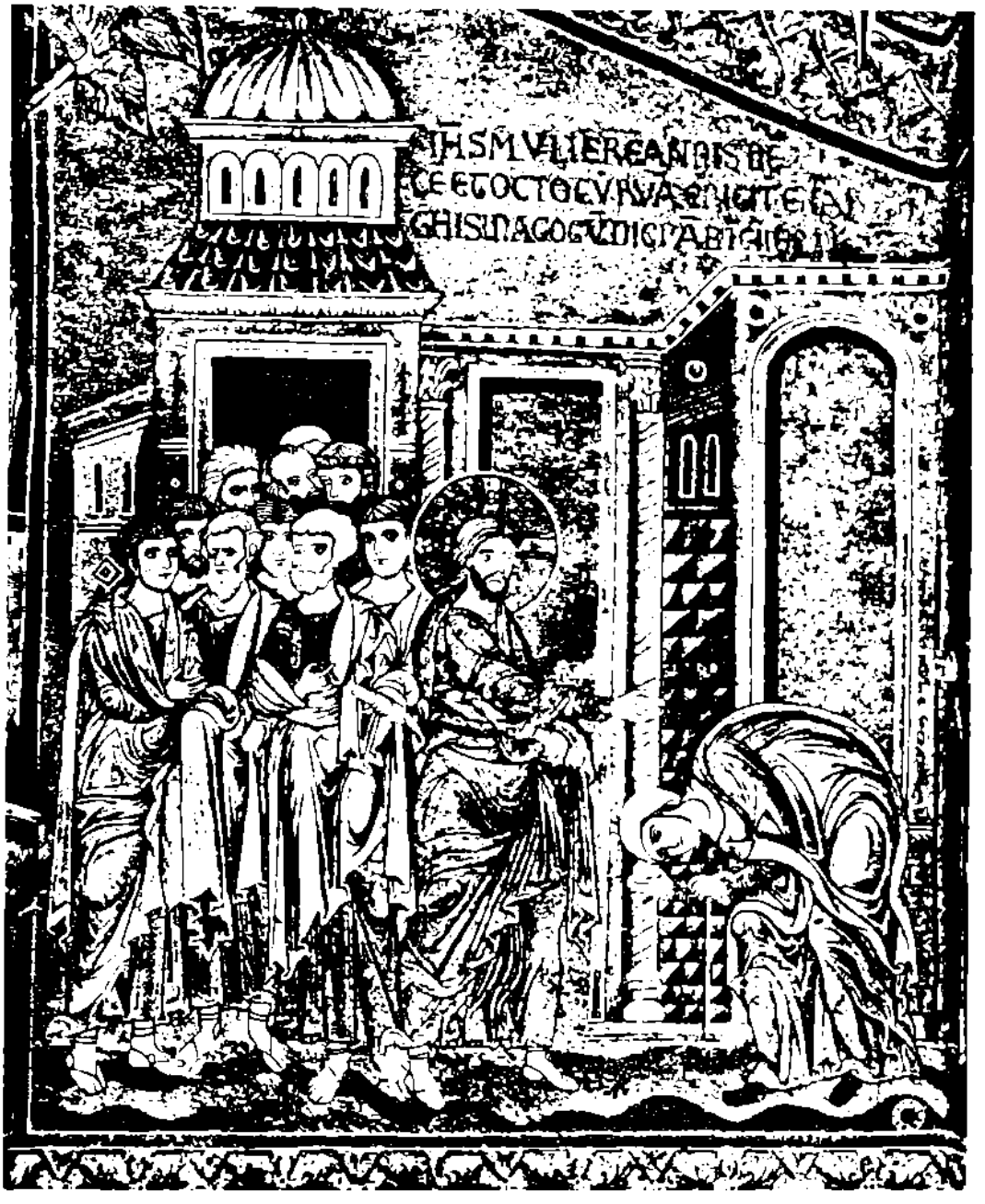
9. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

10. "The Day of Rest in the Old Testament," *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, 7 (1972), p. 70.

11. Ellen White, *Testimonies to the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1882), vol. VI, p. 350.

12. Samuel Dresner, *The Sabbath* (New York: Burning Bush Press, 1970), p. 19.

13. Ellen White, *Testimonies to the Church* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1882), vol. VI, p. 369.



CHRIST HEALS A CRIPPLED WOMAN

This Byzantine mosaic representing Christ healing a crippled woman on the Sabbath and then justifying His act to the rulers of the synagogue places Christ in the midst of Byzantine architecture.

A MEMORIAL OF REDEMPTION

— by Samuele Bacchiocchi

In the Scripture, the history of redemption begins with God creating this planet and its creatures to enjoy eternal fellowship with Him and closes with the assurance that ultimately this original plan will be fulfilled when God Himself "will dwell with them and they shall be his people" (Rev. 21 :3).

What role does the Sabbath play in this divine plan? Being the day when God first ceased from His creative activity in order to establish a special relationship with His creatures by entering into human time and history, the Sabbath not only inaugurates the history of mankind, but also epitomizes its ultimate consummation. The decisive divine acts of creation, redemption and the final restoration are all effectively symbolized and commemorated by this first divinely established institution, the Sabbath. In this study, we will focus our attention specifically on the redemptive meaning and function of the Sabbath.

Although the account of creation presents the Sabbath basically as a *cosmological* institution designed to express God's concern for, and satisfaction over, His complete and perfect creation, the Sabbath's *soteriological* function can already be detected there in an embryonic form. Some of the verbs used to describe its institution foreshadow the redeeming work of Christ: "And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done and he *rested* on the the seventh day from all his work

which he had done. So God *blessed* the seventh day and *hallowed* it" (Gen. 2:2-3).

What is the meaning of the divine Sabbath rest? Its first apparent function is to explain that God's original creation was "finished" and "done" (Gen. 2:2-3). There was no need of an evolutionary process to improve God's workmanship. There is, however, also a deeper meaning, although perhaps less apparent. By entering through the Sabbath into human time to give to His creatures not only things but also Himself, God revealed His willingness to enter into human flesh in order to become "Emmanuel, which means God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

Another redemptive implication can be seen in the assurance of divine blessings: "God *blessed* the seventh day" (Gen. 2:3; cf. Ex. 20:11). In the Old Testament, the notion of "blessing" is concrete, expressing the promise of full and abundant life (Gen. 1:22, 28; 9:1; 49:22-26; Ps. 133:3). In the creation account, the blessing of the Sabbath follows the blessing of the living creatures (Gen. 1:22) and of man (Gen. 1:28). Being the final blessing, it expresses God's ultimate and total blessing over His completed and perfect creation. By blessing the Sabbath, God promised to be mankind's benefactor, reassuring all His creatures of full and abundant life. This sabbatical promise after the fall became the token of the coming salvation of the Lord.

Similarly, God's "hallowing" (Gen. 2:3) of the Sabbath contains redemptive implications. Since the holiness of the Sabbath is determined by the special manifestation of God's mysterious and majestic presence on this day (Ex. 31:13; Ez. 20:20; cf Is. 1:12-15), through the Sabbath, God promises to bless His people with His holy presence. It is noteworthy that Adam's first day of life was a Sabbath day which he spent not admiring God *doing* creative marvels, but *being* in fellowship with Him. Since through the Sabbath God promised not only *products* but also His *presence*, the day could adequately become after the fall the fundamental base and background of all His subsequent saving activities.

After creation, the manna is the next significant example of the redemptive function of the Sabbath. In this instance, the Sabbath is presented not as a cosmic structure

expressing the completion and perfection of God's creation, but rather as a historic institution given to the new nation that God had miraculously *delivered* from Egyptian bondage: "See the Lord has given *you* the Sabbath" (Ex. 16 : 29).

During the week, God revealed Himself through the prodigy of the manna, but on the Sabbath, through His invisible, yet most direct, voice. In order to hear without interferences the Word of God on the Sabbath, it is necessary to look up and not down, to recede from the world of things and not to move, except on the plane of faith. By teaching the people to make adequate preparation to listen to, and to trust, the Word of God, the Sabbath in the manna event becomes the medium to restore that divine-human trust-relationship broken by the fall and by the Egyptian bondage.

The manna experience was the prelude to God's greater revelation of Himself and of the meaning of the Sabbath at Mount Sinai. At this mountain, God provided to the people a fuller manifestation of His glorious presence and of His precepts. The Sabbath's role in this event of salvation history is evident in the septenary structure now used to describe the permanence of God's glory on Sinai:

> The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days; and on the *seventh day* he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud (Ex. 24 : 16).

Ellen White comments that "upon the seventh day, which was the Sabbath, Moses was called up into the cloud."[1]

Why was Moses invited to enter into the glorious presence of God on the Sabbath day? Does God's invitation perhaps unveil the essence of the divine Sabbath rest (which in the creation narrative hides a certain mystery), namely, the day when God especially blesses His creatures with His holy presence? Several elements of the Sinai revelation suggest that the Sabbath is now used to personalize the holy presence of God. Not only does God invite Moses into His presence on a Sabbath, but also through the Sabbath commandment He urges all the people to cultivate His holy presence by making adequate preparation for the day (Ex. 20 : 8-10). Moreover, from

Sinai the Lord explicitly declares the Sabbath to be a perpetual covenant sign designed to remind "that I, the Lord, sanctify you" (Ex. 31 : 13).

These blessings of the Sabbath were designed to constantly remind the Israelites of God's past, present and future saving activities. The Exodus version of the Sabbath commandment, for instance, emphatically enjoins that rest be granted to all, including the animals (Ex. 20 : 10), in order to guarantee to all the members of the Hebrew society the freedom from bondage newly granted by Yahweh (Ex. 20 : 2). This redemption motif is stated even more explicitly in the Deuteronomic version of the commandment: "You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm: therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5 : 15).

Hans Walter Wolff well remarks that "on every Sabbath Israel is to remember that her God is a liberator."[2] The liberation from the hardship of work and from social inequities, which both the weekly and annual Sabbaths granted to all the members of the Hebrew society, not only recalled the past historical exodus deliverance; but also foreshadowed the fuller redemption the Messiah would one day bring to His people. The Messianic age of the ingathering of all the nations is in fact described in Isaiah as the time when "from Sabbath to Sabbath all flesh shall come to worship before me" (66 : 23). The experience of the Sabbath *rest-menuhah*, which A. J. Heschel defines "as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony," [3] is frequently identified both in the writings of the prophets and in the Talmudic literature with the Messianic age, commonly known as the end of days or the world to come.

This prevailing Messianic-redemptive understanding of the Sabbath explains why Christ, in His inaugural address delivered on a Sabbath at the synagogue of Nazareth, announced His mission by quoting the sabbatical message of Isaiah 61 : 1-2 (cf. 58 : 6) which says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has annointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Mark 3 : 2, 6).

The redemptive significance of the Sabbath is brought out even more explicitly in the healing of the crippled woman (Luke 13 : 10-17). Three times, in fact, the Savior uses the verb "to free — *luein.*" To the woman who for 18 years had been "bent over," Christ said: "Woman, you are *freed* from your infirmity." The ruler of the synagogue became indignant over Christ's healing act. For him, the Sabbath meant rules to obey, rather than people to love and save. To clarify the latter meaning of the Sabbath, the Lord addressed the ruler first by referring to a rabbinical concession: "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath *untie* his ox or his ass from the manger and lead it away to water it?" (Luke 13 : 15). Then building upon the concept of untying an animal, Christ draws the obvious conclusion on the form of a rhetorical question: "And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan *bound* for eighteen years, be *loosed* from this bond on the Sabbath day?" (Luke 13 : 16).

Arguing from a minor to a greater case, Christ shows how the Sabbath had been paradoxically distorted. It was legitimate to *untie* an ox or an ass from his manger (possibly because a day without water may have resulted in loss of weight and consequently in less marketing value), yet a suffering woman could not be released on such a day from her physical and spiritual infirmity. What a perversion of the Sabbath! It was necessary, therefore, for Christ to act deliberately on the Sabbath against prevailing misconceptions in order to restore the day to God's intended purpose.

Two Sabbath miracles reported by John (5 : 1-18; 9 : 1-41) further exemplify the relationship between the Sabbath and Christ's redemptive ministry. Both healed men had been chronically ill: one invalid for 38 years and the other blind from birth. In both cases, the Pharisees formally accused Christ of Sabbathbreaking for instructing the invalid to carry his pallet and for preparing clay for the blind man. To defend Himself against the accusation of Sabbathbreaking, Christ made a memorable statement: "My Father is working still, and I am working" (John 5 : 17; cf. 9 : 4).

Some critics use this passage to discredit the Genesis notion of God's observing the Sabbath. They argue that Christ, by saying that His Father has been "working until now" in creative activities, implicitly denies that God has ever experienced the creation Sabbath rest. Is this interpretation correct? Is Christ referring to creative or redemptive activity when speaking of the "working until now" of the Father? The notion of a continuous divine creation, though present in Hellenistic Judaism, is foreign to the teaching of the Gospel of John. For the latter "all things were made" (1:3) by Christ at an indefinite distant past known as "beginning" (1:1).

In the Gospel of John, the works of God are identified with, and manifested in, the saving ministry of Christ: "This is the work of God, that you *believe* in him whom he has sent" (John 6:29; cf. 5:36; 10:37, 38; 14:11; 15:24). The redemptive nature of the works of God is absolutely clear in the healing of the blind man, since this act is explicitly described as the manifestation of "the works of God" (John 9:3). To understand the force of Christ's defense, we need to remember that the Sabbath is linked both to the *cosmos* through *creation* (Gen. 2:2-3) and to *redemption* through the *exodus* (Deut. 5:15; Ex. 20:8-10). While, by interrupting all secular activities, the Israelite was remembering the Creator-God, by acting mercifully toward fellow-beings he was imitating the Redeemer-God. On the basis of this theology of the Sabbath admitted by the Jews, Christ defends the legality of the "working" that He and His Father perform on the Sabbath, since their works consist in raising the dead, and in conducting a saving judgment.

To silence the echo of the controversy, Christ wisely adds the example of the circumcision (John 7:22-24). The Lord argues that if it is legitimate on the Sabbath for the priests to mutilate one of the 248 parts of the human body (that was the Jewish reckoning) in order to mediate through the rite of the circumcision the salvation of the covenant, there is no reason to be "angry" with Him for restoring on that day the "*whole body* of man." The Sabbath is for Christ the day to work for the redemption of the *whole* man. In fact, in both healings, Christ looked for the healed men later on the same day to minister to their

spiritual needs (John 5 : 14; 9 : 35-38).

We can conclude, therefore, that the expressions "The Father is working *still*" (John 5 : 17) and "*we must work* . . . while it is day" (John 9 : 4), which were spoken by Jesus to defend His saving Sabbath ministry, refer not to the works of creation but to those of redemption. God rested at the completion of creation, but because of sin, He is "working still" to accomplish its restoration.

This redemptive function of the Sabbath is further clarified in the episode of the plucking of the ears of corn by the disciples on a Sabbath day (Mark 2 : 23-28; Matt. 12 : 1-8; Luke 6 : 1-5). To defend the conduct of His disciples from the charge of Sabbathbreaking, Christ advances two arguments. First, He reasons that if it was right for David to allay his hunger by eating of the *holy bread*, then it is legitimate also for the disciples to provide for their needs by plucking ears of grain during the *holy time* of the Sabbath. Holy bread and holy time can be used exceptionally to meet human needs, because the purpose of the Sabbath commandment is not to deprive, but to ensure life (Mark 2 : 27). The second argument is drawn from the example of the priests. On the Sabbath, Christ points out, the priests work even more intensively in the temple (Num. 28 : 9-10), performing a host of activities illegal for the ordinary person. Yet, they are "guiltless" (Matt. 12 : 5) because of the redemptive nature of their Sabbath work, designed to provide forgiveness and salvation to needy sinners. Since Christ is "something greater than the temple" (Matt. 12 : 6), having come to fulfill its function and services, He also can legitimately intensify on the Sabbath His ministry of salvation on behalf of needy sinners; and what He does, His followers must do likewise.

For Christ, the Sabbath is "mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 12 : 7), the memorial of the divine redemption from both the bondage of Egypt (Deut. 5 : 15) and the bonds of sin (Luke 5 : 18-19; 13 : 16; John 5 : 17). The order of true Sabbath service which Jesus sets up requires first a living-loving service to human needs and then fulfillment of cultic prescriptions.

In the light of this fundamental redemptive value of the Sabbath, we should consider the meaning of Christ's summons recorded in Matthew as a preface to the episode we

have just mentioned. The Savior says:

> Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you *rest*. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find *rest* for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matt. 11 : 28-30).

What is the *rest* that Christ promises to those who come to Him and learn from Him? Several commentators have noted that Christ's pronouncement was apparently made on a Sabbath since it is connected with the following verse ("At that time," 12 : 1) which begins the above-mentioned Sabbath episode. The possibility exists, therefore, that the rest promised by Jesus is, as stated by J. Daniélou, "the *anapausis* rest of the true Sabbath."[1] In this case, Christ's Sabbath rest is viewed as an "easy yoke" and a "light burden," possibly by contrast with the yoke of rabbinical Sabbath requirements which weighed heavily upon the people.

What is, then, the new "Sabbath rest" that Christ offers to those who labor in vain to procure rest for themselves by fulfilling burdensome legal obligations? Since we noticed earlier that Jesus made the Sabbath the fitting symbol of His redemptive mission, His Sabbath rest granted to burdened souls must be not a newer or simpler set of rules on how to keep the day, but a fuller experience on that day of the blessing of salvation. Through the Sabbath rest, Christ offers not merely physical relaxation, but the peace and joy of His forgiveness and redemption.

This redemptive meaning of the Sabbath is reflected in Hebrews (4 : 2-11), where God's people are reassured of the permanence of the blessings of the "Sabbath rest" and are exhorted to accept them. The author rejects the temporal notion of the Sabbath rest understood as entrance into the land of Canaan (Deut. 12 : 9; 25 : 19), since he argues that the land which Joshua gave to the Israelites is not the "Sabbath rest" which God has made available to His people since creation. The latter can be experienced by believing, obeying and accepting "today" the "good news" of salvation. The Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God is, for the author of Hebrews, not a material experience reserved exclusively for the Jewish nation,

but rather a permanent spiritual blessing available to all who enter by faith into *God's rest* (Heb. 4 : 2, 3, 11).

This brief survey of the redemptive meaning and function of the Sabbath has shown that the day is the first and most revealing symbol of God's gracious concern for His creatures. It originated as the fitting expression of a perfect divine-human relationship where God blessed His creatures not merely with things, but also with His holy presence. After the fall of man, the Sabbath was reiterated at various moments of the history of salvation to provide to God's people the assurance of the final redemption.

The supreme revelation of the redemptive meaning of the Sabbath is found in the Messianic claims and Sabbath ministry of Christ. Not only did Jesus announce His mission as the fulfillment of the sabbatical promises of redemption (Luke 4 : 18-19), but also on the Sabbath, He intensified His work of salvation (John 5 : 17; 9 : 4) on behalf of needy sinners so that souls whom "Satan bound" (Luke 13 : 16) might experience and remember the Sabbath as the day of their liberation. Moreover, Christ completed His redemptive mission on this earth on a Friday afternoon, and having said "it is finished" (John 19 : 30), He hallowed the Sabbath by resting in the tomb (Luke 23 : 53-54; Matt. 27 : 57-60; Mark 15 : 42, 46). As the Sabbath rest at the end of creation (Gen. 2 : 2-3) expressed the satisfaction and joy of the Godhead over a complete and perfect creation, so the Sabbath rest now at the end of Christ's earthly mission expressed the rejoicing of the Godhead over the complete and perfect redemption restored to man. In the light of Christ's teaching and ministry, the Sabbath rest epitomizes the blessings of salvation which the Savior provides to sin-burdened souls. The believer who on the Sabbath stops his *doing* to experience his *being* saved by divine grace, renounces human efforts to work out his own salvation and acknowledges God as the author and finisher of his salvation.

1. Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1958), p. 313.
2. Hans W. Wolff, *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 43 (1971), p. 500.
3. Abraham Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951), p. 10.
4. Jean Daniélou, *Bible and Liturgy* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1956), p. 226.

Christian Art of the Sabbath: A Portfolio

GOD BLESSES THE SEVENTH DAY

This thirteenth-century mosaic from Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice is exciting because it is entirely possible that the artist in Venice depended for his model on much earlier, sixth-century mosaics or manuscript illustrations emphasizing the Sabbath. (page 65 upper)

JESUS EXORCISING MAN

JESUS HEALING MAN AT POOL OF BETHESDA

The two tableaus depicting scenes from the life of Christ are part of an alter veil which served as a kind of biblium pauperum *(illiterate's Bible), containing one hundred paintings of Old and New Testament themes. Completed in 1458 in the town of Gurk, Austria, the "Fastentuch", or "veil of fasting", is a gigantic canvas measuring 88.7 square meters (955 sq. ft.) and is the oldest preserved veil of its kind. In the early Middle Ages once a year the altar was veiled during rites of penance and fasting — a practice continued in Gurk to this day. Two of the tableaus depict Christ performing miracles on the Sabbath: exorcising the man with a demon and healing the lame man by the pool of Bethesda. (page 65 lower left) (page 65 lower right)*

CHRIST ENCOUNTERS THE PHARISEES IN A CORNFIELD

Martin Van Valckenborch places Christ and His disciples confronting the Pharisees concerning the plucking of grain on the Sabbath into a typical Flemish farm scene. (page 66 and 67 center)

THE SEVENTH DAY OF CREATION

John Coburn's tapestry is one of seven richly-colored wall-hangings at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, D. C. depicting the days of creation. The artist says that he "thought of the seventh day as a day of grand achievement rather than as a day of rest." (page 68)








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FESTIVAL OF FELLOWSHIP

— by Roy Branson

The Sabbath was never a haven of solitude, but always an invitation to fellowship. When man first entered the seventh day, he was accompanied by "every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen 1:28). God and His creation were closer than they would ever be again. Man and woman could "hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8). They could feel the breath of God's presence.

Eden was not a refuge for mystics. Instead of private intuition, there was conversation. God directed man and woman to oversee "every beast of the field and every bird of the air," which the Lord God brought "to the man to see what he would call them" (Gen. 2:19). God did not draw mankind into a mystical oneness with Him. Rather, there was a walking and talking in the garden, the giving and accepting of responsibility. Eden was the joy of fellowship.

The garden of delight became the setting for tragedy when human fellowship wrongly became opposed to fellowship with God. The result of man's decision was not the creation of evil matter or of demons, but of loneliness, separation from God and alienation from the land and God's other creatures. Work became labor, responsibility turned to drudgery. When "the Lord God sent him forth from the garden *to till the ground from which he was*

taken," man was doomed to turn even against himself. "The flaming sword which turned every way," made man an exile from the fellowship (Gen. 3:23, 24).

Yet, the Sabbath remained — not a garden, but a moment of delight, not a place to touch divinity, but a time to feel God's atmosphere. It became a day to remember God, and "all the work that he had done," a day to fellowship with God and His creatures. In remembering, human beings could maintain some sense of their origins, of who they were and what was important. The Sabbath provided a time to experience freedom from the demands of a creation that had become burdensome, a time once again to relish all God's creatures. Eden was lost, but the Sabbath remained to knit all people with God and creation.

By the time of the exodus from Egypt, space had become an enemy. The alienation from the soil included all that could be fashioned from the soil: palaces, temples and burial places. Huge buildings in space demanded not fellowship, but slave labor. The ground from which man had been formed was about to swallow him. Instead of delighting in God's creation, he drew back in fear.

Into this chaos, God entered to restore some semblance of creation's original freedom and fellowship. With a mighty hand and outstretched arm, God released the Hebrews from the dust into which they were being ground. Man was not created to be a beast of burden. Man was made to be free, to converse, to walk and talk in the cool of the day.

The conversation could not be so intimate as in Eden. The distance between God and man had to be bridged with thunders, lightnings, trumpet blasts and smoke. God's first words heightened the sense of His transcendence. First, Yahweh commanded that there could be no other gods. He would countenance no pretenders. Second, He would not allow idols or images. Third, Yahweh would not accept casual and disrespectful use of His name.

In another sense, God was clearing away barriers to His presence. He was rejecting all lesser divinities, spirits or revered ancestors as avenues of communion with Him. Nothing in space — neither buildings, nor kingdoms, nor even deities — was to separate Him from His people. The Sabbath was the alternative to the pagan pantheon. It was

a moment when God would be transcendent to human tampering, yet remain present with men. In the Sabbath, man could know God directly, not through incantations, bloodletting or sacrifice of children, but in time shared completely.

As at creation, God did not come to isolated individuals, but to a community. In Eden, He came to the whole creation, but creation, in the form of man, broke that relationship. God did not locate another place for close fellowship with human beings, but He did find a time, the Sabbath day, and a community, Israel.

A day was an appropriate way to restore fellowship. As Abraham Joshua Heschel says:

> Every one of us occupies a portion of space, takes it up exclusively. The portion of space which my body occupies is taken up by myself in exclusion of anyone else. Yet no one possesses time. There is no moment which I possess exclusively. This very moment belongs to all living men as it belongs to me. We share time; we own space. Through ownership of space, I am a rival of all other beings; through living in time, I am a contemporary of all other beings.[1]

Time can be shared. God can be invisible and still share a day with mankind; He can share a day with one person and still share a day with others. More than that, by sharing a day with many, God can bring all together without crowding any out.

God's restoration of fellowship began with Israel's liberation. Still, God's freeing Israel *from* tyranny did not free them *for* fellowship. Before the Sinai experience, Israel was still only a collection of wandering, former slaves. Dissension separated one from another, and discussions turned into strife. But the presence of God transformed freedom into fellowship. By restoring the Sabbath, Yahweh brought out of chaos a new creation: the people of God.

Israel's common relationship to Yahweh brought them into fellowship with one another. Sharing a Sabbath with God and other human beings combined in them a reverence for God with a respect for others. The covenant between God and Israel created solemn obligations among people. No one could ever remember the Sabbath and

forget either God or fellow men. For one day in the week, the fellowship of Eden was restored.

The Sabbath is the arch holding together the structure of the law. Coming as it does between the outline of commitment to God and obligations to fellow men, the Sabbath commandment is the hinge of the two tables of stone. Sabbath fellowship is to renew covenant promises to both God and man. "The people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant" (Ex. 31 : 16).

Of course, Israel did not consistently keep the perpetual covenant. When Israel divorced worship of God from obligations to one another, God sent the prophets as His spokesmen. Jeremiah, at God's bidding, stood before the temple in Jerusalem where Sabbath worship took place and mimicked the invocations of the pious worshipers. Their clichés were a mockery of God's covenant commands:

> Do not trust in these deceptive words: "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord" (Jer. 7 : 5).
>
> Behold you trust in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder, commit adultry, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are delivered" — only to go on doing all these abominations? (Jer. 7 : 8-10).

The Sabbath should have reminded Israel that worship of God and justice to fellow men go together.

Through the prophets, God announced that Sabbath fellowship burst the bounds of human convention. Israel received a special message for those often regarded by Israel as outside the covenant community. The Sabbath was a time when they too could enjoy fellowship with God, when they could know in the present that they would delight in a future fellowship. In the Sabbath, God drew *all* men to Him:

> To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me, and hold fast my covenant . . . And the foreigners who join themselves to the

> Lord . . . Everyone who keeps the Sabbath, and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant — These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer . . . For my house shall be called a house of prayer for *all* peoples (Isa. 56 : 3-8).

Clearly, the prophets saw the Sabbath as more than a weekly restoration of a past garden of delight. They looked upon the Sabbath as a fellowship that was to include all people in a covenant of Sabbath joy.

The fulfillment of the covenant did not come at Sinai or in the prophets. The fullest entrance of God into fellowship with man was the life lived with and for human beings — the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

The first three chapters of Matthew dealing with Jesus' life, from His birth to early ministry, are full of references to Jesus' coming as vindicating the words of the prophets and the covenant they renewed. Matthew's first reference emphasized that as God fellowshiped with human beings in the Sinai covenant and in the prophetic word, so now more completely, in the words of Isaiah, Jesus is "Emmanuel, God with us" (Matt. 1 : 22; cf. Isa. 7 : 14). Luke praises Jesus' coming with hymns taken from the prophets. Such central parts of Christian worship as the angel's *Annunciation*, Mary's *Magnificat* and Simeon's *Nunc Dimitis* are all rephrasings of prophetic passages.

The culmination of these hymns and blessings celebrating the incarnation of Christ was Christ's inaugural Sabbath sermon. Jesus announced that He was the embodiment of the prophetic word — the Word that had renewed the covenant. To restore humanity to fellowship with God, the covenant must be reestablished. Quoting Isaiah, Jesus announced:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
> He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind,
> to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.
> (Luke 4 : 18, 19; cf. Isa. 61 : 1, 2; 58 : 6)

Nothing could be more dramatic in the long history of the

covenant than Jesus' simple statement following this reading: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). No wonder the people thought He spoke as one who had authority. God would not forget His covenant, or His people. Truely the prophetic, covenant Word "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).
emphasized the message of the prophets: fellowship with God means fellowship with mankind. It is impossible to share a day with God and simultaneously oppress the sick, the broken and the maimed. Immediately after reporting the inaugural sermon, Luke begins his account of Jesus' healing miracles which took place on the Sabbath. Seven times during His ministry Christ performed miracles on the Sabbath, each time establishing that the God of the Sabbath — of the covenant — was the God who fellowshiped with all people, no matter how poor or oppressed.

In His ministry and nature, Christ united the divine and the human. Many theologians have struggled to establish the nature of Christ in spatial terms. Orthodox Christianity, after a painful period of discussion, agreed that Christ was not partly divine and partly human, but wholly man. It has not always been easy to grasp this concept, but the Sabbath, a temporal symbol, provides a fresh perspective. People cannot divide time. They exist fully in the Sabbath, yet share it completely with God. Each week, in experiencing the Sabbath that is indivisible, people know a Christ whose time and existence were wholly God's and wholly man's. No wonder that Christ's Sabbath actions for human beings were directed to God, and worship of God propelled Him back toward His fellow human beings.

Yet, the ministry and nature of Christ's incarnation did not alone renew God's fellowship with humanity. It was the death and resurrection of Christ that allowed fellowship with God to be a perpetual covenant. The triumph of the cross over usurping powers not only freed mankind from the tyranny of death and fate, but also guaranteed that God and man would not ultimately remain separated. In the Sabbath, a person is renewed by participating in Christ's Sabbath rest from the cross. "We should," as Jonathan Edwards says, "have sympathy with Christ in

His joy. He was refreshed on this day; we should be refreshed as those whose hearts are united with His."[2]

Christ conquered the rebellious, principalities, powers, dominions and authorities and became the "head over all things for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:23). It is supremely important that Christ did not merely come to earth, have some visions, speak a few wise sayings and depart. Rather, Christ, like Yahweh at Sinai, created a new covenant community. He chose the twelve and sent out the seventy. He prayed that they would "love one another . . . by this all men will know that you are my disciples" (John 17:6; 13:35). The Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us was not a secret saying, a private word to scattered individuals, but a public ministry. The death and resurrection created a community which lived, flourished and became the body of Christ, the new testament of God in the world.

The church embodied Christ in its communal celebrations of God's redeeming and reconciling acts. The special days and actions of the Christian church recreated for human beings the quality of God's acts of liberation and fellowship. Revered theologians of the Christian church, such as Augustine and Calvin, so appreciated the Sabbath as a memorial and foretaste of God's reconciling work that they named the Sabbath, along with baptism and the Lord's Supper, a sacrament. Calvin states that in the Sabbath "a very close correspondence appears between the outward sign and the inward reality."[3] Thus, "the Sabbath was a sacrament, since it was a visible figure of an invisible grace."[4] Like the other sacraments celebrated by the Christian community, the Sabbath is a memorial of past relationships with God, a present awareness of God's presence and a promise of God's future full and perfect fellowship with liberated and redeemed mankind.

A closer examination of the parallels between baptism, the Lord's Supper and the Sabbath heightens the appreciation of each. Baptism, Paul believed, recreated the experience of two past events. As Israel in the exodus entered the water as slaves and emerged free from the oppressing Egyptian armies, so sinners enter the waters of baptism and emerge free from sin (I Cor. 1:1, 2). Baptism is also a

reenactment of Christ's burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3, 4). Moreover, in rising from the water, as Christ rose from the grave, the baptized are promised that they will be part of the future, permanent resurrection. Thus, baptism points back to Israel and Christ, as well as forward to the Second Coming (Rom. 6:6). Likewise, the Sabbath fellowship is not only with redeemed Israel and a risen Saviour, but also with a returning Lord.

The Lord's Supper also draws participants into fellowship with God. Christians sometimes forget that the Lord's Supper (or Last Supper) was indeed a meal, the Passover meal, memorializing Israel's redemption from Egypt. Along with baptism, the Lord's Supper points back to Christ. He was the perfect paschal lamb around which a new Israel, a renewed covenant community, was forming. As Christians partake of the Lord's Supper, they renew within themselves God's unique act of salvation in Christ. They enter into the special fellowship Christ's act creates. Just as baptism points to the future, so also the Lord's Supper invites Christians to look forward to the heavenly marriage supper with the Lamb. Jesus told His disciples at the Last Supper, "I shall never eat again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16).

What baptism is once in a life, and Lord's Supper is quarterly, the Sabbath is every week — a sacrament of God's redeeming fellowship. Like baptism and the Lord's Supper, the Sabbath stretches man's experience back into the past, to the creation and the redemption of Israel. Sabbath fellowship is the fellowship of man saved from nonexistence and slavery. It includes the stranger within the gates, the prisoner, the blind and the oppressed. The Sabbath points back also to Christ's ultimate act of redemption and reconciliation, His conquering the powers and principalities of evil through His death on the cross. Each Sabbath is a baptism into His death and burial rest and a reviving to a newly refreshed life. Each Sabbath is also a holy communion, a fellowship with Christ, who shares human time and shares Himself.

As baptism and the Lord's Supper refer to the past and anticipate the future, so the Sabbath points to God's past and future fellowship with mankind. The renewing companionship of Sabbath rest assures man that he will be a

part of that coming perfect community. The fellowship relished in and with Christ on His holy day is a promise of the approaching great Day of the Lord. The Sabbath rest is a weekly baptism into Christ, a holy communion with God the Saviour.

Sabbath fellowship creates the desire for a more intimate relationship with God; creation week moved to the crescendo of the final day and communion with God. The Sabbath was not a peaceful interlude, but the climax of creation. The seventh day has always drawn man forward. Celebration of the Sabbath pointed the prophets' vision toward the triumph of the Last Day. Christ Himself identified the Sabbath with the messianic age. Because of His victorious Sabbath of the passion week, Hebrews says "the promise of entering His rest remains" (Heb. 4 : 1). The church has continued to anticipate in the completion of each week the culmination of history. John Calvin taught the Reformation that "the Lord through the seventh day has sketched for his people the coming perfection of His Sabbath in the Last Day."[5] In eighteenth-century America, Jonathan Edwards preached that the Sabbath, "a pleasurable and joyful day," was "an image of the future heavenly rest of the church."[6]

The climax towards which the whole creation groans is not an escape for individual souls. God is not merely rescuing isolated individuals, but fulfilling a covenant with His people. The day of the Son of Man is a day when every eye shall see Him: "For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in His day" (Luke 17 : 24). That "future, perfect eternal Sabbath of the Last Day" is no more a private rest than was Eden or the exodus.[7] Hebrews promises that "there remains a sabbath rest for the *people* of God" (Heb. 4 : 9).

For the believing community, Sabbath rest cannot be Sabbath apathy. Entering the Sabbath does mean one can rest in Christ's completed work of redemption. "Whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from His" (Heb. 4 : 10) and is released from trying to achieve salvation through diligent effort. But the quality of Sabbath rest is not listless indifference. Christ's work gives the people of God the assurance to make the Sab-

bath a day of celebration. The Lord's return is certain. Each Sabbath can already participate in the victory of the Great Day of the Lord.

Heschel states that "unless one learns how to relish the taste of the Sabbath while still in this world, unless one is initiated in the appreciation of eternal life, one will be unable to enjoy the taste of eternity in the world to come."[8] For centuries, Israel has welcomed the Sabbath in holy festivity. The coming of the Sabbath is the arrival of an honored guest, a queen to be met in the palace of time with beautiful robes and graceful dances, the entering of a bride sanctified to the people of God.

For Christians such as Karl Barth, joyful anticipation is intrinsic to the Sabbath. History's "last day," he believes, "will be a Sabbath day," a time of freedom and joy, of fellowshiping in "the rest of God Himself."[9] In the words of de Quervain, "The joy of Sabbath is . . . the superabundant joy at the blessings which have already been given and joy in expectation of new acts of God, at the coming salvation."[10]

The Sabbath continues to have the power to draw human beings out of their alienation and despair into a community created by the mighty acts of God. The Sabbath is an exodus from chaos and slavery and death, a sacred meal shared with the victor who conquers through the gift of His body. It is a weekly marriage supper with the Lamb, a baptism into the resurrection of the world. On this day, time past and time future enter into time present. The Sabbath is a prism, a multifaceted jewel, refracting throughout our lives the fullness of God's glory.

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8. Heschel, p. 74.
9. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3, bk. 1, p. 218.
10. A. de Quervain, "Das Feiern der Germeinde," *Die Heiligung* (1942), p. 353. Quoted in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*. vol. 3, bk. 4 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), p. 51.

GLADNESS IN HOPE

— by Charles Scriven

"Therefore, a sabbath rest still awaits the people of God."
— Hebrews 4 : 9

An ancient legend says that when God gave the law to Israel, He said, "My children, if you accept the law and observe My commandments, I will give you for all eternity a thing most precious that I have in My possession."

"And what," asked Israel, "is that precious thing?"

"The world to come."

"Show us in this world," said Israel, "an example of the world to come."

God answered, "The Sabbath is an example of the world to come."[1]

The Jewish legend teaches that the Sabbath is a foretaste of the future. From what we have already learned we can see that this is a statement of stupendous hope. To the Israelites, the Sabbath represented a day of restful fellowship with God. It was a day of blessedness and peace, a festival, a jubilee. If now we find that the Sabbath offers a foretaste of the world to come, then we need have no fear of what lies ahead. We may look forward to the future, for it will arrive filled with rest, blessedness, and peace.

The legend comes from ancient Jewish culture. But we may find the same idea about the Sabbath expressed in Christian writings. The author of the New Testament Book of Hebrews takes as his theme the declaration that Jesus Christ is the One Person in all human history who may be called "the stamp of God's very being" (Heb. 1 : 3). The same author makes the Sabbath day a symbol of the future. "Therefore," he writes, "a sabbath rest still awaits the people of God." What the Sabbath brings you today, he tells his readers, is what the world to come will be like.

The message of Jesus, together with His life, death, and resurrection, brought to the first believers a mood "of expectant wonder, of ecstatic joy, of buoyant confidence."[2] Early Christianity was, at bottom, a hope, a belief in the coming of a peace that has no ending. Hebrews acknowledges how the Sabbath points to this coming peace. At the climax of Creation Week God shared His own rest with the man and woman He had made, thereby declaring His friendship with the human race, His determination to connect our destiny with His own. From that time on, every Sabbath would signal the promise in the universe, every Sahhath would build up the hope of the faithful.

Once again we see why the Sabbath is a gift of gladness, why it is a holiday to cheer our hearts. For in building up our hope, it strengthens something we cannot live without — without which, quite literally, we would die.

But is hope really that important? Viktor Frankl, a famous Vienna psychiatrist, saw in a German concentration camp that it is. One day a fellow prisoner confided to him that a voice in a strange dream had promised to answer whatever question he wanted to ask. The man said he had asked to know when the camp would be liberated, and the dream voice said March 30, just a few weeks off. Under the torturous conditions in the camp the man took the dream seriously, believing with all his heart that March 30 would bring salvation. But as the day approached, and the news reaching the prisoners remained discouraging, the man took sick. On March 31 — after the deadline, after his hope had shattered — the man died. The physical cause was typhus, but Dr. Frankl believes it was the sudden loss of hope, the severe disappointment,

that lowered the man's resistance to the infection. The experience, along with many others like it, convinced him that if you have nothing more to expect from life, you begin to lose it.[3]

If that is true, then we can say that the Sabbath builds up life, for every Sabbath reinforces the confidence that we have more — not less — to expect from the future. By testifying that our whole lives stand in the light of promise, every Sabbath enables us to be forward looking and forward moving. It saves us from the raw hopelessness of the man in the concentration camp, from the kind of despair that may actually kill the body.

But even more, it rescues us from resignation, from that glum acceptance of things that deaden the spirit even though the body goes on functioning. It liberates us from the attitude of the person in one of Kurt Vonnegut's books who, on hearing that a friend was writing an anti-war book, snapped back, "Why don't you write an anti-*glacier* book instead?" Rather than thinking, as the character did, that it is useless trying to stop misery and improve the quality of life, we can, because of our hope, work at such tasks with all our souls and might. The Sabbath declares that blessedness and peace await the people of God, which justifies trying to make things better today — in our personal relationships, in community situations, and even in world affairs. Our hope gives us, as one great Christian said, "a passion for what is possible."[4]

We can see, then, that the Sabbath hope is nothing trivial. Rather, it is like a precious stone, a thing to delight in and to grasp hold of in sheer wonderment and gratitude. Even during the golden age of Greek civilization you would have found nothing to resemble the Sabbath hope. The dramatist Sophocles, who captured the spirit of that ancient time as well as anyone, wrote in *Antigone* about the tragic life of a ruler whose decisions lead to the suicide first of the heroine Antigone, then of the ruler's own son, and then of his own wife.

"What destiny, ah what, can yet await me?" the heartbroken man cries out. And then he prays for his own death — which, he believes, would be "the best fate of all." But the chorus tells him to stop. "Pray thou no more, for mortals have no escape from destined woe."[5]

The ancient Greeks felt, in other words, that you can count on things turning out bad. The same feeling existed later in the Roman Empire, too. For example, the famous Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor in the second century after Jesus, brought no good news. "There neither were formerly, nor are there now, nor will there be again, more or fewer evils in the world (than have always been)," he wrote pessimistically. And the Roman philosopher Plotinus, who lived a century or so later, said that "in this world itself, all is best when human interests and the memory of them have been put out of the way."[6]

When you get a picture of how gloomy people felt about the future, you can see just how good the Good News of Christianity really must have been. "Do not believe this hopeless talk," the preachers of the early church said in effect. "You don't have to accept the idea that all is best when you are dead. Jesus lived, died, broke out of the tomb, and lives again as the ruler of the universe. Because of this we have a new word for you: You can live your life in the light of promise. You can throw off your bleak spirit and put on a spirit of exuberance and joy."

The author of the Book of Hebrews attempted to convey such assurance when he wrote that "a sabbath rest still awaits the people of God" (4:9). All God's creation moves toward the rest, blessedness, and peace of an eternal sabbath. The day is coming when love and togetherness will be everything to everybody.

And just here we can see the beauty of a *seventh-day* Sabbath, which is what the Bible unfailingly prescribes. For if we have a jubilee of gladness at the *end* of the week, then each weekly cycle reinforces our sense of movement towards the future. If the weekdays constitute a journey toward sabbath rest and peace, it enhances our certainty that all of life represents a journey toward rest and peace. The Sabbath heightens our awareness that we are going somewhere, intensifying our passion for life. The peace and gladness of the future become revolutionizing principles in the here and now, enlarging our vision, giving vigor and direction to our existence.

So the Sabbath is like a treasured ally. Because we are human we each wonder, "Is there any hope for me? for my family, my country? for the whole world we human

beings share?" And when, at the end of every week, a Sabbath arrives to wipe away our fear and sorrow; when after six working days there comes a climax of rest and gladness; then we know that, yes, there is hope. The weekly Sabbath tells us that, however overwhelming our human problems may seem, the steadfast love of our Creator is greater still. One day a single "pulse of harmony and gladness" will beat "through the vast creation."[7]

Yet I must not leave the impression that all of this is automatic, as though there were magic in a ritual of rest. The Book of Hebrews says it is the people of *God* who may have Sabbath hope. The seventh day can never be a true Sabbath just because a person ceases from his labor on that day. It can be a Sabbath only for the people of God. Only persons who belong to God, who center their existence in His love, who worship Him as the source of being and the key to all life, can have on the seventh day an experience of festivity, renewal, and hope.

So the Sabbath is not *the* reality. God is. The Sabbath is a sign, blessed and hallowed at the Creation, to keep us in touch with Him. It makes us aware (as the Creation story shows) of the love that lies behind everything that is. It asks us (as the fourth commandment shows) to fling away our miserable idols and participate with the Creator in building a world of freedom, justice, and love. Finally, it points to the promise in our universe, giving us a blessed hope by which to live.

In all these ways the Sabbath is our friend, a gift from Heaven for which no gratitude is adequate.

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2. Paul Minear, quoted in J. C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, (Philadelphia, Pa., The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 22.

3. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), pp. 74, 75.

4. S. Kierkegaard, quoted in Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 20.

5. From *The Complete Works of Sophocles*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 146, 147.

6. Quoted in Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 156, 157.

7. Ellen White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, p. 678.



THE SABBATH

Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, a dramatic, romantic painter, famous for his great illustrated German Bible, visited Sicily in 1826. While there, he must have seen the powerful Byzantine mosaics of Christ in Montrale Cathedral, for the God of "Der Sabbath" maintains a Byzantine weight and grandeur. Schnorr's romantic imagination adds to the traditional angels a more mysterious atmosphere evoking a Creator who is a massive spirit brooding over His work.

MOMENT OF ETERNITY

— by Gerald Winslow

"The Sabbath was made for man."
—Jesus

Nothing seems to be less under human control than the passage of time. We did not govern the moment of our conception or birth. Most of us will not dictate the time of our departure at death. Between these events, there develops the perception that whatever human effort creates will surely be destroyed by the current of time. Many human actions that belong under the heading of hubris are simply responses to these facts. But an ancient symbol, the Sabbath, may still teach those who experience it a better way.

Much of importance may be said about the symbolic meaning of the Sabbath.[1] But, in this essay, I have chosen only to emphasize the ways in which the Sabbath may enrich the human experience of time through symbolic representation of tbe Beginning and Eternity under the sovereignty of God. Whatever else may by said about the Sabbath, it is a symbol which is uniquely well united to help us see the depths of our existence in time, its beginning and continuance, in the light of Providence.

The Beginning

Scholars may argue about the origin of the Sabbath.[2]

But what is of concern here is not the beginning of the Sabbath, but rather the Sabbath as a symbol of *the* beginning. As theologian Herbert Richardson says, "the origin of an idea may affect its relevance, but it never determines its truth."[3] The truth about Sabbath commences with the words, "In the beginning, God . . ." Embedded as it is in the Genesis story, the weekly cycle with its crowning day, the Sabbath, stands as a perpetual symbol-in-time for the work of creation. Without elaborate explanations, the story simply says: "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in Creation."[4]

In the earliest forms of the Sabbath literature, no reason is given for the Sabbath except that the sovereign God who has the power to create the world has also made the Sabbath. As one scholar has observed:

> Early biblical law rarely gives reasons and theorizes even more rarely. It would not be in the normal range and character of the Bible to verbalize the idea of the sabbath. . . . But the importance of the sabbath and its frequent mention in the Bible have presented a challenge to rationalization since ancient times.[5]

The need for additional reasons apparently made it necessary for later biblical writers to surround the Sabbath with more explanatory statements. But in its most basic form, the keeping of the Sahbath symbolizes the acceptance of the sovereignty of God.

Kenneth Burke has stressed the fact that after the designation of the seventh day as the Sabbath, "God" became "Lord God" in the creation story.[6] The Creator is Ruler. Symbolically, the Sabbath places mankind under the order of this Sovereign. It comes at the beginning of the emphasis on God's dominion. Burke says that the Sabbath is a "polar term." That is, it stands in the story for *rest* after *work*. In this sense, it is in dialectical opposition to the six days of labor. The Sabbath with its cessation thus becomes a moral "No." It is implicitly negative because it is antithetical to the six days of creation.

In Burke's analysis, the moral "No" is prior to and leads to the Idea of Nothing.[7] In other words, the moral negative drives toward the concept of the Divine, the One who

is *no* particular *thing*. Just as a child initially learns the meaning of authority at least partly through hearing "No," mankind accepts through cessation the sovereignty of that One who transcends all particular things. In somewhat the same vein, Rabbi Heschel writes:

> Indeed the splendor of the day is expressed in terms of *abstentions*, just as the mystery of God is more adequately conveyed *via negationis* in the categories of *negative theology* which claims that we can never say what He is, we can only say what He is not.[8]

The Sabbath is unmatched as a symbol capable of representing the no-*thing*-ness of God. "Thing," says Heschel, "is a category that lies heavy on our minds, tyrannizing all our thought."[9] But God is Spirit, not some thing. This is a lesson which materialists, both ancient and modern, have needed to learn. God may be "thingified" just as certainly through the reification of symbols as through the deification of objects. Holy time, the experience of Sabbath, helps to preserve human beings from such idolatry. The Sabbath returns mankind to the realm of the spirit. As Heschel states, "The Sabbath preceded creation and the Sabbath completed creation; it is all of the spirit that the world can bear."[10]

It must be emphasized in this context that Sabbath came before the Fall, before the rulership of the Creator was challenged by transgression. Burke claims that disorder is implied in order. Thus, the order of the Sovereign symbolized by the Sabbath must sooner or later be rejected, saying "no" to the "No." And the disorder in the transgression leads to death. It is true, of course, that disobedience did lead to capital punishment for Sabbathbreakers.[11] But Burke must be reminded that in the narrative Sabbath is prior to sin and death. What is more, the story does not even hint that the order implied in Sabbath would lead inevitably to transgression. Nor is there any indication how many perfect Sabbaths passed before the Fall. In the *beginning* (before sin), mankind's first full day on the Edenic earth was the Sabbath.

Since sin, Sabbath has been a means of recapturing some measure of that Edenic experience. Mircea Eliade claims that "every ritual has a divine model, an ar-

chetype."[12] Later, he says: "The Judaeo-Christian Sabbath is also an *imitatio dei*. The Sabbath rest reproduces the primordial gesture of the Lord. . . . "[13] The periodic repetition of this archetypal act reveals the desire to return to the paradisiacal state. That Edenic situation was lost "once upon a time" and is lost again in each individual's experience. The passage of time brings decay and destruction and guilt. But, as Eliade states elsewhere, "it is interesting to observe a certain continuity of human behavior in respect to time, both down the ages and in various cultures. This behavior may be defined as follows: To cure the work of time it is necessary to 'go back' and find the 'beginning of the World.'"[14] This "journey" back to the Origin presents the opportunity for renewal and regeneration. One is placed in touch with the earliest roots of existence and another "birth" becomes possible.

This periodic rediscovery of the Beginning is not just for individuals. Religion is preeminently a social phenomenon. Even the most private religions are usually only variations of the communal faith of a group. So it is with the Sabbath. It is more than a time for the individual to remember the Creator, for the Sabbath is a supremely social institution. Even the first Sabbath was not celebrated alone. Community, it seems, requires sacred times when the origins can be celebrated and the needs of the group can be represented in ritual. The Sabbath affords time for community, time for the joy of saying "We." Rabbi Heschel quotes this ancient allegory: '

> After the work of creation was completed, the Seventh Day pleaded: Master of the universe, all that Thou hast created is in couples; to every day of the week Thou gavest a mate; only I was left alone. And God answered: The Community of Israel will be your mate.[15]

The Sabbath, then, requires memory — an imaginative recalling. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day."[16] Life for individuals and for communities has many beginnings. And yet, in a more important sense, life never begins but is always the gift of other life. In the experience of Sabbath holiness, one may be reunited with both Creator and

creation and thus with one's community and with oneself. One may remember again the magnificence of the gift of life. And in the celebration of holy time, one's sense of time's effects on life may be transformed.

Eternity

The memory of the past seems sufficient reason to believe in the reality of the flow of time. With a celebrated illustration, Edmund Husserl demonstrates the impossibility of denying the "immanent time" of the flow of consciousness. He says, "The evidence that consciousness of a tonal process, a melody, exhibits a succession even as I hear it is such as to make every doubt or denial appear senseless."[17] But how can this subjective experience of the flow of time be represented more adequately?

In Western civilization, the passage of time is generally symbolized as moving in a single direction. Like an arrow which has been shot, time is pictured as racing from the past through the present toward the future. Unlike the placid pool of endless cycles used to symbolize time in the East, time in the West is the demon which destroys all human efforts, and finally destroys life itself. Time would probably matter little were it not for an awareness that life will end. The "melody" will not continue forever. Given lives which seem to be consumed by time, humans seek the eternal. But even the eternal must be experienced in time. For humans, who are time beings, the experience of time remains.

Or does it? Is there no way to transcend the world of appearance and experience the realm of eternity? Van der Leeuw writes: "Duration, then, is the great stream flowing relentlessly on: but man, encountering Power, must halt. He then makes a section, a *tempus;* and he celebrates 'sacred time,' a festival. In this manner he shows that he declines the given as such, and seeks possibility."[18] The experience of eternity is made accessible for those who perceive that not all times are the same. But perhaps this experience requires a more "primitive" view of time.

Such a view of time may be seen in children. Jean Piaget, who has documented the development of the time concept in children, points out that in the child's "primi-

tive" conception of time, "each action still has a time of its own, so that there are as many temporal series as there are schemes of action."[19] If, for example, the young child works more rapidly or does more work, time is perceived as passing more rapidly. The young child may remember more vividly than the older child or adult, but the memories have their own special times.

Piaget's portrayal of the child's "primitive" time concept bears some interesting similarities to Gerhard von Rad's description of ancient Israel's understanding of time.[20] To be sure, Israel's God is the Lord of history whose mighty acts follow one after the other. In this sense, Israel has a linear view of time. But von Rad claims that there is no single time line in the Hebrew chronicles; nor is there any *abstract* view of time. Rather, time is associated with events. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. . . ."[21]

For anyone who believes that all times are the same, the Sabbath is surely nonsense. But even to the modern mind, it seems, all times are not the same. Most people do celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and a few holidays. The seasons in America are marked by Labor and Memorial days. Still, such events often tend only to promote the objectification of time. That is, time is measured in numbered units. It is thought of in terms of marketable packets. And life can be "back-timed" from the threescore years and ten. In many respects, the lesson of numbering our days has been well learned. It cannot be denied, of course, that an objective notion of time does facilitate certain important tasks such as planning for the future. But objectified time, the time of punch clocks and prison sentences, often deprives one of the immediate moment — of savoring the eternal "Now."

The Sabbath, sacred time, has the power to liberate one from the bondage of objective time. In the commotion of modern society, time relentlessly devours life. But on Sabbath time "stands still." This is the essential spirit of Sabbath — in cessation, eternity is encountered. Time is no longer money or monuments. Time becomes possibility. As Heschel says: "The essence of the world to come is Sabbath eternal, and the seventh day in time is an example of eternity."[22]

Thus, in opening the experience of eternity, Sabbath offers freedom from neurotic preoccupation with the apparently destructive passage of time. In this regard, it is interesting to observe the connection made by two noted psychoanalysts between Sabbath symbolism and unrepressed life. In his discussion of repression Norman O. Brown claims that "only repressed life is in time, and unrepressed life would be timeless or in eternity." Brown goes on to symbolize this experience as the "Sabbath of Eternity."[23] And borrowing Brown's phrase, fellow psychoanalyst Joost Meerloo states: "Man's yearning for eternization, his longing to be beyond temporariness and beyond his confinement in time, leads to various symbolic actions whereby man tries to reach beyond the beyond and to live life in an unrepressed way in the Sabbath of Eternity."[24]

The trouble is that the repressed life with its objectified time is sustained in a powerful way by each person's knowledge of his or her own impending death. Liberation from objectified and repressed time, liberation for Eternity, can never be fully accomplished without altering attitudes toward death. To quote Brown again, "[W]e cannot imagine 'rest,' . . . [or] 'eternity' except as a cessation of all activity — in other words, as death." And yet what we need is the "reconciliation of life and death. We have therefore to sustain the possibility of activity (life) which is also at rest."[25]

But how shall this be done? Once again, the *lived* experience of Sabbath has the power to set us free. Many reasons have been offered for the apparent difficulty people in today's culture have when facing death. But one factor which may deserve more attention is simply the absence of genuine repose in the lives of many (perhaps most) people in contemporary society. From a biblical perspective, death is usually seen as a rest — a dreamless sleep.[26] But in the course of modern life such respite must seem a very remote symbol. Father Diez-Alegria, a Jesuit author, makes a point that I believe is important: "Death for me, seen from 'this side' — that is to say, without stressing transcendent hope — presented itself in a very positive way as fitting into the category of 'rest,' of 'sleep,' of the 'Sabbath pause.' Modern activism, turning

even one's vacation into a time of mad activity, has lost to a great extent this concept of 'rest,' which is so deeply biblical. . . . "[27]

Rest after labor is the biblical view of death. Death is a Sabbath pause at the end of life. And for those who know the Lord of the Sabbath, anticipation of the rest may be calm and even joyous in the deepest sense. The Sabbath permits a foretaste of that rest, and a preview of eternity for the time *being*. For the Sabbath points beyond death to the hope for eternity.

Today, the society which I know best suffers from a lack of sacred time. Genuine observance of the weekly Sabbath is rare. "Thank God it's Friday" means little more that the promise of a weekend filled with new and frenzied activities. The yearly "sabbaths" of the American heritage have been converted to long weekends. (Who can even recall what they commemorate?)

An ancient symbol, the Sabbath, still has important lessons to teach. In rediscovering the Sabbath, the time *being* may find resources for sustaining a community that experiences both Beginning and Eternity.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For the most part, I am using the word "Sabbath" to refer to the seventh day of the week, which, according to the biblical account, was hallowed by God and given to humans as a day of rest and worship (Gen. 2 : 1-3). It should be noted, however, that the Sabbath symbolism in the Bible extends far beyond the weekly Sabbath. Seven special sabbaths per year were designated as commemorative festivals (Lev. 23). Moreover, every seventh year was specified as a sabbatical year (Lev. 25 : 1-7). After seven sabbatical years, every fiftieth year, a special Year of Jubilee was celebrated. (Lev. 25 : 8-12). Although the weekly Sabbath is the central concern of this essay, the more extensive symbolism of *holy time* as represented in these other "sabbaths" should also be kept in mind.

2. As early as 1883, Wilhelm Lotz suggested that the Hebrew Sabbath (šabbāt) was borrowed from the taboo days of the Babylonians (šabbattu) which fell on the seventh, fourteenth and twenty-eighth days of the month. Wilhelm Lotz, *Questiones*

de Historia Sabbati (Leipzig: J. C. Heinrichs, 1883). More recently, von Rad has agreed that the Sabbath probably did begin as some sort of taboo day. Gerhard von Rad, "The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions," *Old Testament Theology*, trans. by D. M. C. Stalker (New York: Harper Brothers, 1962), vol. 1, p. 16. But Andreasen has offered some telling arguments against this theses and states: "The Old Testament does not understand the Sabbath as a taboo day even in the oldest stratum." Niels-Erik A. Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath: A Traditional-Historical Investigation*, The Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, Number Seven (Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, 1972), p. 265.

In a short essay like this one, it is impossible to discuss the traditional-historical criticisms of the biblical literature regarding Sabbath. Such a discussion has been provided with admirable clarity and thoroughness by Niels-Erik Andreasen in the work just cited. It is very important, of course, to know as much as possible about what is behind the text. But Andreasen comments near the end of his own analysis of the Sabbath literature: "The theological significance of these [Sabbath passages] . . . is largely untouched and remains to be explored" (p. 273). And as David Tracy has observed, the Christian theologian must also be concerned about the meaning "in front of the text." David Tracy, *A Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 77, 78.

3. Herbert W. Richardson, *Toward an American Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 119.

4. Genesis 2 : 3.

5. Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84 (1972), p. 454.

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It may be that Burke ignores the distinction between the two creation stories. But it seems, for purposes of his "logological" analysis, he assumes that there is an underlying reason for the combined structure of the two accounts as we have them.

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9. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

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12. Mircea Elide, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954), p. 21.
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26. I Kings 2 : 10; II Chron. 21 : 1; Eccl. 9 : 5, 6; Matt. 9 : 24; I Cor. 15 : 51, 52; I Thess. 4 : 13-17.
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JUBILEE OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

— by Niels-Erik Andreasen

"The seventh day is the armistice in man's cruel struggle for existence, a truce in all conflicts, personal and social, peace between man and man, man and nature, peace within man."[1]

— Abraham Joshua Heschel

Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally associated the Sabbath with creation (nature walks), worship (church attendance) and covenant sign (obedience to God's law). None of these associations is denied by the late Rabbi A. J. Heschel in our opening statement, which will serve as an organizing principle for this essay. Instead, Heschel notes two other areas of the Christian's life which may be blessed by the Sabbath. One is man's attitude toward work, and the other is his attitude towards people, including himself.

First, man's attitude towards work: "The seventh day is the armistice in man's cruel struggle for existence." General agreement exists that the fourth commandment is not a double injunction: man must work on six days and must rest on the seventh day. The commandment assumes that a man (and woman) will work. Its exclusive concern is to limit work to the six days.

This interpretation does not mean, of course, that the Bible lacks injunctions to work. The most familiar is St.

Paul's dictum: "If any one will not work, let him not eat" (II Thess. 3 : 10). The Old Testament conception of man's work is far broader and somewhat ambivalent.[2] On the one hand, work is part of the commission to man received from God Himself (Gen, 1 : 26, 28; 2 : 15). According to Genesis 2 : 5, the earth was originally lacking in two areas — it had no water and no man to cultivate it. The mist mentioned in verse six could serve as a potential source of irrigation, but without the work of man "to till it and keep it" (vs. 15), the planting of gardens (vs. 8) would not flourish. The reason for this commission to work must not be sought solely in man's need to extract from the ground such products as he required to live (cf. Ps. 104 : 14 f.), for man is here also called upon to protect the land for its own sake (lit. "to keep it" Gen. 2 : 15). His work must be seen as part of God's work of creation (Ps. 104 : 22 f.), and herein lies the real reason for man's commission to work. Nowhere is work itself understood as a curse or a burden. The work done "in the sweat of your face" (Gen. 3 : 19) is burdensome only because of the adverse circumstances surrounding it. As a principle, work is not deplored.

The teachers of Israel ever since the days of Solomon encouraged hard, consistent work as the only way to success and security (Prov. 6 : 6-11; 24 : 30-34). However, their teaching is also ambivalent about work, and this is our second point. They do not question work as such, but *hubris* — work that entices the worker into trusting his own strength and forgetting God (Prov. 11 : 28; 15 : 16). Perhaps the most vivid warning of such deception is given in Psalm 127 : 1 f. It is at this point that Heschel suggests that the Sabbath can improve the important relationship between man and his work.

To begin with, the biblical warning against *hubris* in the worker is urged by the Sabbath. Exodus 16 illustrates this fact in the teasing story about the Israelites who gathered manna, "some more, some less" (vs. 17). Since each gatherer had just enough, any manna kept overnight bred worms and spoiled (vs. 20). H. W. Wolff has suggested that this story is an almost humorous criticism of man's ever-zealousness for work.[3] That point is made clearly by the worms and the rot, but it is pressed home

in a far more effective, yet felicitous way by the Sabbath. The commandment to cease all work on the Sabbath emphasizes the complete adequacy of the manna gathering on six days and undercuts that human *hubris* which drives man into the field once again on the seventh day despite the fact that he has a sufficient supply of manna left over from the sixth day. The record comments tartly that such people "found none" (vs. 27). Seen this way, all the Sabbath laws, of which Exodus 16 contains the first (and earliest) in the Old Testament, may be taken as a judgment upon *hubris* in the worker.

Perhaps a more obvious relationship between the Sabbath and the worker is the permission to stop all work which the Sabbath insists on granting to everyone.[4] The reason, according to Deuteronomy 5, is the exodus deliverance: "You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day" (vs. 15). All of Israel, bond and free, must be given the opportunity to participate in the Sabbath's exodus experience.[5] On the Sabbath Israel is a community of equals.

In this passage, however, the emphasis on equality is overshadowed by the demand for freedom. The Sabbath commands Israel to let her dependents go free. It issues a humanitarian appeal for Israel to extend her experience of the exodus freedom to all workers.[6] It brings freedom not only from human bondage, but also from the demands of nature — the heavy requirements of sowing and harvesting (Ex. 34 : 21). The Sabbath, then, faithfully protects man from totalitarianism of all kinds, whatever the source.

The armistice in the cruel struggle between man and his world, about which Heschel speaks, provides two benefits: freedom of the worker from his work, but also freedom of the work (that is the world and its resources) from man's exploitation. The Sabbath has notably contributed to this second aspect of the truce in man's struggle through its sister institutions, the sabbatical and jubilee years.[7] The Sabbath most likely inspired these institutions whose intentions were to protect people, land and prop-

erty from exploitation by the worker.[8] In short, the Sabbath brings a respite in "man's cruel struggle for existence" whether that cruelty is directed towards the worker or the object of his work.

Finally, it may be asked if the Sabbath restrictions on work actually will enhance work. The most familiar version of the Sabbath commandment reads: "Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is the sabbath to the Lord your God; (in it) you shall not do any work . . ." (Ex. 20:9 f.). A general commandment, not concerned with specific tasks such as gathering manna, sowing or harvesting, it encompasses all man's activities, tasks, business or trade. Whatever occupies man must be completed in six days, before the Sabbath, on which day he must perform no work. By thus demanding that all work stop after six days, the Sabbath commandment invites limits and goals to be placed before man's work and urges on the worker such creative efforts as will bring his work to its completion before the seventh day. God brought His work to completion in this way before the Sabbath.

Does such a Sabbath understanding of work mean anything in our time? Recent studies of the theology of work generally begin with the view of Max Weber and R. H. Tawney[9] that the Protestant Reformation, notably the reformed branch, introduced a new concept of work: all work, not only that of priests and monks, represented a religious calling or vocation worthy of the most faithful Christian.[10] While other factors also contributed to the economic system of our time, Protestantism certainly did help to alter the meaning of work. It made work worthy, desirable and rewarding. It also helped to pave the way for an expanding, industrious economy with all its blessings and curses.

In recent years, this Protestant work-ethic (as our attitude to work in the West is sometimes called) has been seriously challenged by a new protest against the evils which have accompanied it: materialism, greed, ruthless ambition and empty, bored, depersonalized workers. Many solutions have been proposed. Some have attempted to make work more interesting, creative or varied. I believe that a serious consideration of the Sabbath understanding

of work can also help us respond to current problems of the work-ethic. The Sabbath coldly condemns *hubris*, that arrogant "take-all" attitude of many producers and manufacturers. It introduces an armistice in the struggle between man and work. Both bring freedom to man from drudgery and relieve the world from those who would exploit it. Finally, the Sabbath urges a completion of work by setting limits and goals for it, thus making it creative. In short, the Sabbath holds the potential for being a catalyst in restoring a proper relationship between man and work.

Heschel's second point deals with man's personal and social conflicts. The Sabbath, he notes, brings "peace between man and man, man and nature, peace within man." The peace to which Heschel refers is not simply absence of war, like a *pax romana*. It is *shalom*, meaning peace, well-being, harmony, security and understanding. A deeply personal word, *shalom*, when spoken, restores broken relationships and heals the inner person. Peace *(shalom)* attends the individual whose person is whole and whose relationship to others is sound.

According to the Bible, a person is whole when soul, spirit, heart and body combine into an ideal of unity and harmony. "The Hebrew," writes H. Wheeler Robinson in commenting upon the unity of man in Old Testament thought, "conceived man as an animated body, and not an incarnate soul."[11] By the same token, a community is sound when the relationships within its families, clans, tribes and nation are characterized by the ideal of unity and solidarity. But such ideals of harmony and solidarity are not always achieved. Within the individual, the spirit may "faint" (Psalm 142 : 3), the soul may be "bowed down to the dust" (Psalm 44 : 25), intoxication may take away the heart or understanding (Hosea 4 : 11), the flesh may "waste away" (Job 33 : 21). Within the community, interpersonal relationships can also break down. Two touching and masterful portrayals of such breakdowns are the Old Testament stories of Michal, David and Paltiel (II Sam. 3 : 14-16; 6 : 23) and of Amnon and Tamar (II Sam. 13 : 1-15). Does the Sabbath offer some solution to these disorders, as Heschel suggests?

Perhaps the most natural place to begin is with the

freedom which the Sabbath provides. It is essentially a freedom from work, as we have seen, provided for those not in a position to secure it (Ex. 23 : 12; Deut. 5 : 12-15), but it also includes freedom from servitude imposed by the pressures of work (Ex. 34 : 21). We further noticed that the Sabbath's sister institution, the sabbatical year, offered the slave permanent freedom in the seventh year of servitude (Ex. 21 : 1-6; Deut. 15 : 1-18).

However, such freedom does not necessarily bring *shalom* to the parties involved. The master to whom these laws of liberation are given may still view his fellow as a freed slave or servant. He is not necessarily united to him in a bond of unity and solidarity characteristic of the highest order of interpersonal relationships. To be complete, freedom must become independent of the one who bestows it. Deuteronomy 15 : 12-18 makes that very clear by urging that the master who sets his slave free should also make that slave independent through generous gifts. Only then does the slave become a free man, not just a liberated slave. The regulations of the jubilee year concerning restoration of land and property on the fiftieth year further contribute to that freedom which becomes independent of its liberator.

Genuine freedom must lead to equality. While the Old Testament Sabbath texts themselves do not advocate complete human equality, Isaiah 56 refers at least indirectly to the equality between all people which the Sabbath provides. Isaiah is here responding to the role of foreigners and eunuchs in the congregation of Israel. Traditionally, they were excluded, but the prophet wants that practice reversed. These outcasts, of whom the Assyrian and Babylonian wars produced many, were to be welcomed in the Sabbath worship of the temple, if they genuinely wished to belong to God. The remarkable prominence in this chapter of the Sabbath as a sign of such belonging would suggest that this day was an important symbol of membership in the covenant community of Israel, but it must also have been a powerful symbol of equality among all worshipers, something which these former outcasts desperately needed.

The Sabbath thus represents not only freedom for all but also equity among all. Hence, it brings a truce into so-

cial conflicts and establishes solidarity and unity in the community. This result must also apply today. On the Sabbath the executive and his janitor share the same pew; no one gives the other an order or extracts a service. The Sabbath sets all men free and makes them equal. It restores the ideals of solidarity and unity in the community.

Finally, the Sabbath brings to man a certain kind of serenity, what Heschel calls "peace within man," and what we have called the ideal of inner harmony. It is caused partly by man's release from the conflicts of this world, whether through work, or ambitions or social relationships, and partly by the vision of the transcendent which man receives in the worship and joy which this day can provide.

So far, nothing has been said about the Sabbath as a day of celebration and worship, although the Old Testament presents ample evidence that it was not, as some have charged, a day of gloom, but a day of joy. The command to not light fires (Ex. 35 : 3) and to stay indoors on the Sabbath (Ex. 16 : 29) are case laws applying the Sabbath principle to specific circumstances, not primitive taboos associated with early Sabbath observance. Whatever glimpses we get of the early Sabbath suggest that in addition to being a day without work, it also provides an occasion for worship.[12] The one psalm (Ps. 92) which is specifically assigned (in intertestamental times) to Sabbath worship is a psalm of thanksgiving, sung in a festive mood with musical instruments (vs. 3). Isaiah's opposition to the Sabbath (Isa. 1 : 13) was not caused by the festivity it provided, but by the impossible juxtaposition of a religious festival and iniquity.

This festive and worshipful quality of the Sabbath has enabled it to transform strict prohibitions of work into a freedom from work, and thus it has made room for the experience of joy in the life of man. Such Sabbath joy is nourished by the satisfaction found in the completion of all work. The creation Sabbath itself (Gen. 2 : 2 f.) illustrates this point. The creator rested on the Sabbath, blessed it, sanctified it because His work was completed. Seen this way, the Sabbath becomes symbolic not simply of God's creative work, but particularly of the completion of that work, and this makes the Sabbath symbolic of

God's redemption which is but "completed creation." Similarly, on the Sabbath man's inner conflicts which arise over problems with unfinished work, or badly accomplished tasks or strained relationships are neutralized by the Sabbath assurance that all work will be completed in God. Here is an occasion for joy, and this joy is expressed in a temporal experience of divine presence, bringing serenity to man, inner harmony, "peace within."

In the opinion of many interpreters, the beautiful Sabbath texts in Isaiah 58 : 13 ff. ought not to be read as a separate promise of materialistic rewards to those who do not transgress the Sabbath law. After all, the context of these verses deals with a true fast which the prophet interprets as practical religion and personal integrity.[13] Verse 13, which deals with the Sabbath, contributes to these concerns of the chapter by making the Sabbath into a festal occasion which is not inhibited by personal or materialistic interest. It warns against letting religion turn in upon itself. It urges the religious person to transcend his preoccupations with gain and profit by caring for others and serving them by means of redemptive works. Such works are characterized by harmony and completion and, like the finished works of God, they bring true Sabbath joy. Riding on the high places (vs. 14) is therefore not a materialistic reward, but a spiritual experience of sharing in God's finished works and taking delight in them. This is the true Sabbath joy which brings inner personal harmony — "peace within."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (London, 1974), pp. 128-133.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
4. They are servants, foreigners, children and even domestic animals (Ex. 20 : 8-11; 23 : 12; Deut. 5 : 12-15). cf. N.-E. Andreasen, "Festival and Freedom," *Interpretation*, 28 (1974), pp. 281-297.
5. Cf. B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London, 1962).
6. Cf. Deut. 5 : 15; 15 : 15; 16 : 12; 24 : 18, 22.
7. Ex. 21 : 1-6; Lev. 25, 26; Deut. 15 :1-18; II Chron. 36 : 21.
8. R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel I: Social Institutions* (New York, 1961), p. 174.
9. M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, 1930); R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, 1938).
10. Cf. John Calvin, *Institutes*, vol. III, ch. 10, p. 6.
11. *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1946), p. 70.
12. II Kings 4 : 23; 11 : 4-12; I Chron. 23 : 30 f.; Isa. 1 : 13; Hosea 2 : 11.
13. There is good reason for accepting the unity of Isaiah 58 in spite of many contrary critical opinions on the matter. Cf. J. Muilenburg, "Isaiah 40-66," *The Interpreter's Bible*, V (New York, 1956), p. 677. In this chapter, the worshipers are accused of fasting to gain material blessing while pretending to offer sincere devotion to God.



THE SEVENTH DAY OF CREATION

A twentieth-century German artist, Ernst Barlach, entirely abandons the monarchial God. His woodcut shows a figure resting from His activities, not elevated above His creation, but almost a part of it.

JESUS' WAY WITH THE SABBATH

— by John Brunt

Recently I heard a group of college students discussing their childhood memories of growing up keeping Sabbath. They discussed what it was like to be in a home that observed the Sabbath from sundown Friday evening until sundown Saturday evening. Two features stood out as I listened to them share their reminiscences. First, it was clear that for the most part their attitudes were very positive. They had pleasant memories of family time together. Many of them, for instance, found that Friday night was the time they became the most homesick now that they were away at college. They missed the Friday night worship rituals that made them truly feel a part of family.

On the other hand, the second thing that stood out was the common body of rules with which they had grown up. Although they came from various parts of the country, it was amazing how many of them had had the same unwritten rules during their childhood. Hiking, for instance, was perfectly acceptable on Sabbath. Even fairly vigorous hikes were considered appropriate Sabbath observance. On the other hand, swimming was taboo. There was a slight dispensation, however. Whenever they were near water, whether river, lake, or ocean, they were permitted to wade up to their knees. But somehow the knees seemed to be the universal line that distinguished Sabbath observance from Sabbath breaking. Below the knees was

Sabbath observance. Water above the knees meant breaking the Sabbath. In a similar vein, most of them were permitted to do a good bit of running and playing outside. However, whenever a ball of any kind was introduced into the play, they began to break the Sabbath. There were a number of other similar rules, and as the students discussed them they couldn't help but laugh. It was as if there had been some kind of oral tradition that their parents all knew and had accepted.

All of this caused a certain frustration, however. On the one hand they appreciated Sabbath and wanted to preserve it. On the other hand, there was a certain discomfort with the rules. Was the knee really a magical point that separated true Sabbath observance from Sabbath breaking? Their discussion raised an important question. How can a community take Sabbath seriously without being legalistic? How is the Sabbath really to be preserved? We seem uncomfortable with legalistic rules, but without such rules can we preserve the sanctity of Sabbath?

Let us look at the most famous incident involving Sabbath in the New Testament—Jesus and His disciples walking through the grainfields. There are three versions of this story in the New Testament. It is recorded in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. Mark was probably the first to be written:

> One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (Mark 2 : 23-28).

The story is a marvel in its simplicity. First, there is the simple statement of Jesus' and the disciples' activity. They walked through the grainfields while the disciples plucked heads of grain and presumably ate. But the Pharisees

offer an objection in the form of a question, "Why are the disciples doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" Jesus responds with a story from their own tradition. Haven't they heard that when David was hungry he and those who were with him ate the shewbread from the sanctuary—food that was lawful only for priests? Then Jesus concludes with a saying about the Sabbath.

The version of the story that appears in both Matthew and Luke seems so close to Mark that it is probably best to assume literary dependence. In each case, however, there are certain changes. These are fewer in Luke's account:

> On the Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath?" And Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" (Luke 6 : 1-5)

Notice that Luke spells out in greater detail the method the disciples used. They rubbed the wheat with their hands. He also explicitly states that they ate it. In Luke the question with which the Pharisees object is addressed specifically to Jesus and not merely His disciples. In Jesus' answer Luke leaves out the reference to Abiather the high priest. This is probably because Luke recognizes a problem here. According to the Old Testament story, recorded in I Samuel 21, Ahimelech was high priest rather than Abiather. Luke avoids Mark's slip of the memory. Finally, Luke omits the first part of Jesus' final saying.

We now turn to Matthew's account:

> At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence,

> which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of man is lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12 : 1-8).

Matthew's view of the story shows more modifications than does Luke's.[1] In some cases Matthew and Luke agree against Mark, and therefore this story has been used as evidence against the chronological priority of Mark. Most of these agreements, however, could have been made independently for the same reasons.

Although Matthew's modifications do result in different nuances for the story (for example, Matthew's account heightens the conflict with the Pharisees and emphasizes the contrast between Jesus and the entire Jewish system of worship more strongly), the basic features of the story are the same in all three. Gospel scholars call this kind of story a "pronouncement" story. The main feature of such stories is a saying of Jesus which serves as a punch line at the end. In a sense the whole story leads up to that punch line.

It is generally thought that the church was interested in pronouncement stories and preserved them during the time Jesus' sayings and stories about Him were passed on orally, because these pronouncements were especially helpful for the church in its conflicts. These sayings of Jesus helped the church resolve difficult problems and gave it ammunition as it sought to defend its actions against its accusers.

There can be little doubt that this story fits this general situation. Undoubtedly the church saw itself in the situation of the disciples — accused by Jewish opponents and vindicated by what Jesus said. The church in essence became the "disciples who were with Jesus."

It is important to notice that when understood in this way there is nothing in the story that would hint at either a change in the day for keeping Sabbath or an end to Sabbathkeeping in the early church. The dispute between the

disciples and the Pharisees has to do with *how* the Sabbath is to be kept. The issue is not which day to keep or whether Sabbath should be kept; rather it is a question of Sabbath observance. The very fact that it was Jesus' *disciples* who were accused probably made this story especially useful for the church. History repeated itself. The disciples, those who followed Him, were again being accused of improper Sabbath observance and found their vindication in this story.

In this regard the story contrasts two different ways of Sabbath observance. The way of the Pharisees and the way of Jesus. We will look first at the way of the Pharisees, and then at the way of Jesus.

Several things should be remembered when talking about the Pharisees. First, we are dependent upon the New Testament for what we know about first-century Pharisaism, and the New Testament is, of course, an unsympathetic account. In addition, we have the writings recorded in the *Mishnah*. This is a written codification of the oral tradition passed on by rabbinic Pharisees. However, the *Mishnah* was not written until almost A.D. 200. There is no doubt that it records oral traditions which date back much further. We know that the first-century Pharisaic rabbis accepted a whole body of oral traditions that built a fence around the law by adding additional rules to avoid even coming close to breaking the law. But we can never be sure which of the specific rules recorded in the *Mishnah* actually dated from the first century. We can, however, get a general idea of the shape of the oral tradition. When this is put together with the New Testament, certain features of the Pharisaic way of Sabbath observance become apparent.

1. The Pharisaic way was based on a system of casuistic rules.[2] Proper Sabbath observance was spelled out via a system of detailed prohibitions. The *Mishnah*, for instance, classifies 39 classes of unlawful work on the Sabbath.[3] In our incident Jesus' disciples would have broken at least two of these by threshing and winnowing. The degree to which rules were created for almost every conceivable situation can be seen when the *Mishnah* spells out rules for how to observe Sabbath in the specific instance of one's home burning down.

Such a case presented at least a couple of problems for the Pharisees. Putting out a fire was illegal on Sabbath, as was carrying things from one's home. However, certain exceptions were made if one's house was burning down. One could carry food out of the house, but only enough to get each member of the family through the rest of the Sabbath. One could not *carry* clothes out of the house, but could *wear* as many clothes as one could get on. The rabbis differed as to whether or not one could go back into the burning building and put on a second array of clothes. Putting the fire out was not allowed, but if a Gentile volunteered a good Jew could allow the Gentile to put it out. One could not, however, ask a Gentile for such a favor.

All this sounds humorous to us, but it was serious business for the Pharisees. The motive was to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath. By observing all these rules the pious Jew would be sure that he or she did not even come close to breaking the Sabbath.

2. In at least some respects the way of the Pharisees put law above human need. For example, healing was not permitted on Sabbath unless life was actually in danger.[4] To be sure there was a concern for human life. If life was actually in danger the Sabbath could be broken, yet at the same time much suffering would be allowed to continue in the name of preserving the Sabbath. Thus in some ways the rules took priority over people.

3. A final feature of the Pharisaic way of Sabbath observance was a judgmental and critical attitude towards others. It is a curious feature of the story that the Pharisees seem to appear out of nowhere. Are they there just waiting for Jesus and/or His disciples to make a mistake? Perhaps they are following them around to see what they will do. At any rate, they are on the spot ready to accuse. Their rule-oriented approach to Sabbath predisposes them to judge not only their own behavior, but that of others as well. If Sabbathkeeping is primarily observance of the rules, then obviously anyone who doesn't observe the rules is a Sabbathbreaker and can be labeled as such. And so the attitude of accusation becomes part and parcel of the Pharisaic way of Sabbath observance.

Jesus' way of Sabbath observance is in sharp contrast:

1. His ethic is a contextual ethic rather than an ethic of casuistic rules. This can be seen from the example Jesus uses. The rules say that David and his companions may not eat the bread of the temple, but Jesus is willing to justify the breaking of the rules in this case. Jesus' ethic is based on deeper principles that must be *weighed* to determine the proper course of action. Life is more that just a matter of following the rules.

Jesus talks about this in the Sermon on the Mount where He shows that true observance of the law is not a matter of a literalistic behavior, but of motives and reason behind the behavior. Jesus shows that the law speaks not to acts alone, but to the deeper realm of the mind and heart. One keeps the law by understanding its principles and acting according to those principles, not by mere outward conformity.

While this is clear throughout Jesus' teaching, it is with regard to the Sahhath that it is demonstrated most graphically. In this sense the Sabbath becomes a paradigm of Jesus' ethical stance. As Jesus and His disciples relate to the Sabbath we see Jesus' ethic and His attitude toward law. This brings us to the second major feature of Jesus' Sabbath observance.

2. Jesus' way gives priority to the value of people. Human needs take priority over the literalistic observance of rules. According to Jesus' way the whole purpose of the law is to meet human needs, to enhance human life. For Him the whole law exists for human beings, and again this is seen particularly in the Sabbath. The Sabbath is made for humans, not humans for the Sabbath.

This is related to Jesus' lordship of the Sabbath. For many years scholars have debated whether the last part of Jesus' saying, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath," means that Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath or should be taken in a more general sense. The term "son of man" in Aramaic simply meant "human being." Is Jesus saying that humans are lord of the Sabbath? This would seem to fit with the first part of the saying recorded in Mark, and yet it seems clear from the gospels that, for their authors, the term "Son of man" carries more weight than that. It is Jesus who is Lord of the Sabbath, but it is also clear that as Lord of the Sabbath Jesus offers the Sabbath to hu-

mans for their benefit and offers them freedom in Sabbath observance. This brings us to the final characteristic of Jesus' way of Sabbath observance.

3. Jesus' way implies *freedom*. He defends His disciples even though their actions don't fit with the rules. Jesus vindicates them. Now does Jesus offer a new set of rules? Rather, He shows in His own life, through incidents such as this and especially through His healing miracles, what the Sabbath is all about. He then leaves His followers free to incorporate those principles into their lives as they choose. Jesus' way is the way of freedom.

Now that we have seen the contrast between these two ways, we must ask what all of this has to do with *our* Sabbath observance. How can the church today embody Jesus' way and remain serious about the Sahhath? Many fear that without rules there would be chaos. Jesus' way seems so unwieldy. Rules provide so much more security. Will not the community be left at sea without them?

The fear that the community of believers might lose the sanctity of the Sabbath is both understandable and legitimate. And that fear is an ever-present impetus to the Pharaisic way of Sabbath observance. But the church must always remember that Jesus' way is a different way. In His way the Sabbath becomes a paradigm to point the way to principled freedom; not a freedom that says anything goes, but a freedom that takes the *meaning* of the Sabbath seriously.

At this point we are confronted with a great irony. On one hand, we are always tempted to think that without rules we will forget the Sabbath. But on the other hand, the Sabbath itself reminds us that the way of rules will not do. Jesus uses the Sabbath to show us that true obedience is a matter of principle and a matter of the heart rather than one of literalistic observance of rules. To take Jesus' lordship of the Sabbath seriously is to accept Jesus' way of keeping the Sabbath — the way of principled freedom.

This does not mean laxity and lack of concern for the Sabbath. It does mean that the community that follows Jesus' way will be a certain kind of community. It will be a community that thinks about the meaning of the Sabbath. It will be a community that reflects together on how

the Sabbath can best be kept in a way that both contributes to its meaning and benefits the *people* to whom God has given it as His gift. Thus people in the community will plan together to find positive ways of actualizing the meaning of the Sabbath in their lives. It is this thinking, reflection and planning on the part of the members of the community, always with a focus on the scriptural material on the Sabbath, that will keep the community serious about the sanctity of the Sabbath. And if we believe Jesus' way, this approach will be more effective in preserving the true sanctity of the Sabbath than casuistic rules could ever be.

In addition, the community that follows Jesus' way of Sabbath observance will be a community that values freedom. While members reflect together and learn from each other, they will also be tolerant of each other, recognizing that the Lord of the Sabbath grants this freedom. The Lord of the Sabbath is the Lord of each of us. To accept Jesus as our Lord is to recognize His lordship of our brothers and sisters and to accept the freedom that He gives to them. In fact, this aspect is so central that it can serve as a helpful bench mark to help us determine whether we are truly following Jesus' way of Sabbath observance. Once we begin to be judgmental about the sincere efforts of our brothers and sisters to observe Sabbath it is a good sign that we have slipped into the way of the Pharisees.

The community that accepts Jesus' way will thus avoid the temptation to forget the meaning and sanctity of the Sabbath on the one hand, and will also avoid the temptation to become critical and judgmental like the Pharisees on the other. As our Lord gives us victory over both of these temptations, He truly becomes the Lord of the Sabbath for us, and we receive the gift of the joy of the Sabbath.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Matthew adds the detail that the disciples were hungry when they walked through the grainfields. This ties the disciples' story more closely to the David story which Jesus uses as an example, for there David and those with him are hungry. In Matthew the Pharisees' objection becomes a statement rather than a question, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." Again Matthew omits the anachronistic reference to Abiathar as high priest. In addition, he adds a second example to justify the disciples' behavior. Priests in the temple work on Sabbath, and Jesus is greater than the temple. Matthew seems more interested than the other gospels in making the contrast between the *person* of Jesus and the whole Jewish system. Matthew also adds Jesus' quote from Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." Matthew seems fond of this saying of Jesus. He records it here and also in Matthew 9:13. Finally, Matthew also leaves out the first part of Jesus' saying.

2. For a more detailed account of the Sabbath and the Pharisees see the author's *A Day for Healing* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald, 1981), pp. 11-18.

3. *Shabbath* 7:2, in Herbert Danby (trans.), The *Mishnah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 446.

4. *Shabbath* 16:1-6; Danby, p. 114.

5. For more detail see *A Day for Healing*, pp. 44-54.



THE SABBATH

The contemporary Adventist artist, Kenneth MacKintosh, engraves trinitarian symbolism into his woodcut, "The Sabbath": God the Father is represented by a star-burst, the Holy Spirit is a descending dove, and Christ Himself is a sacrificial lamb.

THEOLOGY OF THE SABBATH: A Selected Bibliography

— by John Brunt, Fritz Guy and Sakae Kubo

Much has been written in recent years by both Jewish and Christian writers on the theology of the Sabbath. Especially encouraging is the increasing number of Adventists writing on this topic. The following annotated bibliography, which is limited to studies in English, includes works by Jews, Protestants, and Seventh-day Adventists.

Jewish

Berman, Saul J. "The Extended Nation of the Sabbath"; *Judaism*, 22 (1973), pp. 342-352.

Dresner, Samuel H. *The Sabbath* (New York: Burning Bush Press, 1970).

A less philosophical, more practical approach to the meaning of the Sabbath than Heschel's.

Friedman, Theodore. "The Sabbath: Anticipation of Redemption"; *Judaism*, 16 (1967), pp. 443-452.

Develops the view that the Sabbath as a foretaste of the world-to-come should be enjoyed in that manner. Thus, the Sabbath frees man from "his consciousness of time, the competitiveness that pervades every sphere of life, and the di-

minishing pleasure man finds in work."

Gordis, Robert. "The Sabbath is Forever"; A symposium in *Judaism*, 31 (1982), p. 398.

Heschel, Abraham J. *The Sabbath* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1951).

The most stimulating, provocative and seminal work on the meaning of the Sabbath by a Jewish theologian. Builds his theology on the concept of holiness in time. He has had great influence.

Tsevat, Matitiahu. "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath"; *Zeitschrift für die alttestamantliche Wissenschaft*, 84 (1972), pp. 447-459.

Sees the basic meaning of the Sabbath as acceptance of the sovereignty of God, because man renounces on every seventh day his dominion over time. Since it is not related to any agricultural or astronomical phenomenon, this sovereignty is absolute.

Protestant

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958, 1961), vol 3., bk. 1, pp. 98-99, 213-238; vol. 3, bk. 4, pp. 47-72.

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Among Protestant theologians, Karl Barth has

been the most original in dealing with the theology of the Sabbath. Barth's wide-ranging theology is represented very well in Brown's articles. Barth's major contributions are his consideration of the Sabbath as a revelation of the nature of God, as the beginning of the covenant grace, as man's first day to which he comes with nothing to offer, as a type of Jesus Christ "who is the living presence of Eternity in Time," as a sign of Christ's sovereignty and as a sign of justification and redemption.

Carson, D. A., ed. *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982).

A collection of essays by evangelical scholars including responses to the work of Samuele Bacchiocci and other Seventh-day Adventist writers.

Cox, Harvey. "Meditation and Sabbath"; *Turning East* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977).

Edwards, Tilden. *Sabbath Time: Understanding and Practice for Contemporary Christians* (New York: Seabury Press, 1982).

An Anglican reflection on the importance of the Sabbath rest in modern culture.

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Consists mainly of a justification for keeping the first day instead of the seventh (the Old Testament Sabbath has been fulfilled in Christ but the first day is kept as a sign that the rest is still a future hope). Nevertheless, Jewett does go beyond this concern and explicates De Quervain's and Barth's theology.

Richardson, Herbert W. *Toward an American Theology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), chapter 5, pp. 108-160.

Connects the Sabbath with the incarnation and with the Holy Spirit. For Richardson, the presence of Jesus, "God with us," is more important than his redemptive activity, "God for us." The meaning of the Sabbath as God's presence with us is extended by the Holy Spirit by the presence in us.

Saunders, Herbert R. *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation* (Plainfield, N. J.: American Sabbath Tract Society, 1970).

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